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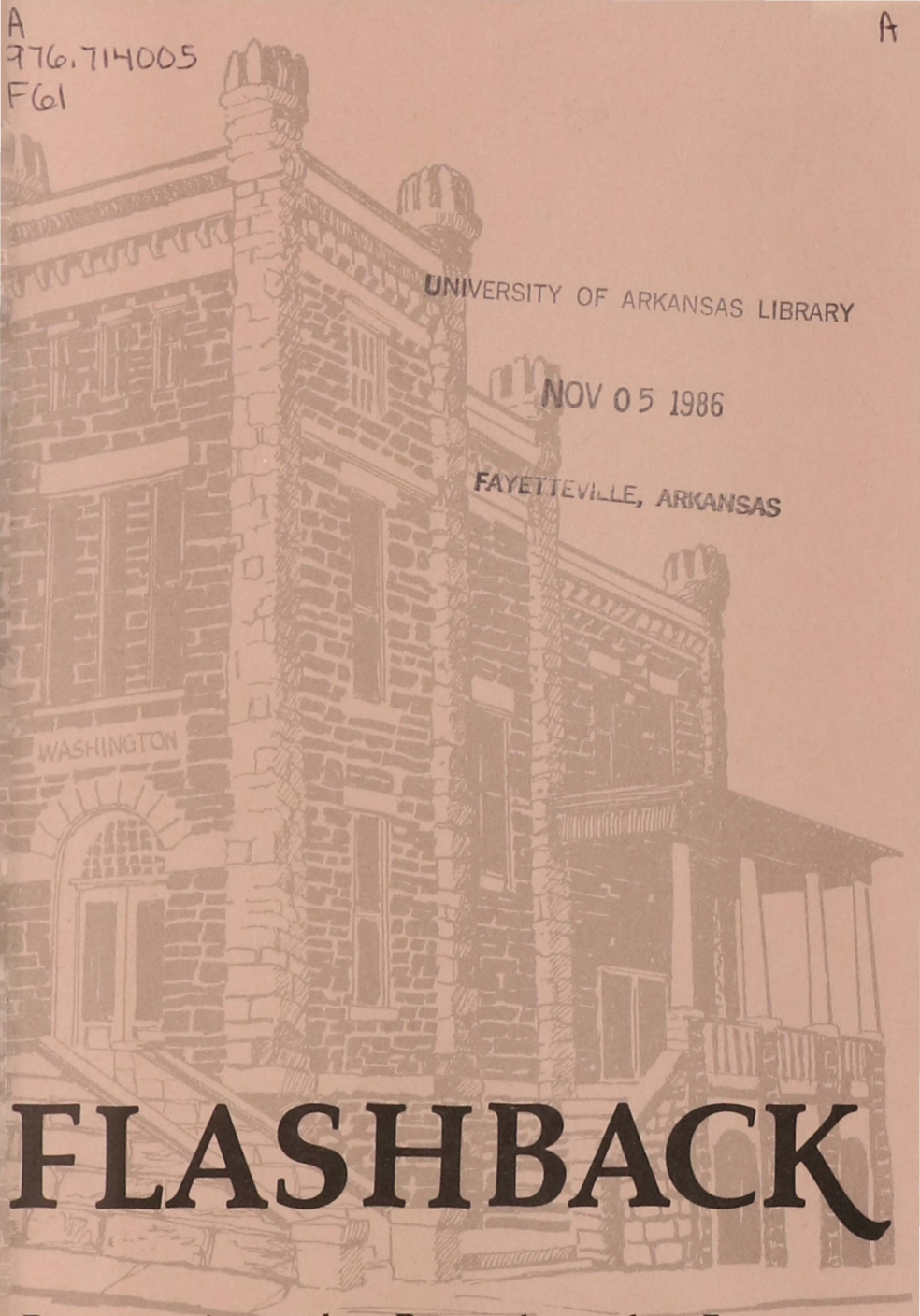

FLASHBACK

Preserving the Past for the Future

November 1986
Washington County Historical Society

FLASHBACK is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. All material being submitted for publication should be sent to the editor at 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701. No payment is made for the articles published in FLASHBACK.

Membership in this Society is open to anyone interested in the collection and preservation of Washington County history. Membership dues are $7.50 annually, payable on a calendar basis.

Copies of FLASHBACK for prior years cost $5.00 each. Current year's issues are $3.00 each.

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FLASHBACK

Published by the Washington County Historical Society

Volume Thirty-six *Number Four*

That's Papa peeking between Greeta on the left and sister Edna who is 18 mos. old. Photo 1900, with Spot casting a wary look.

MY FIRST 18 YEARS

by Edna Byrel Davis Henbest

Edna Byrel Davis was born at Diamond, Arkansas, in Van Buren County, on January 26, 1899, the daughter of William Morton Davis and Nancy Malinda Braudaway Davis. Edna was the fifth child in the family.

Walter I. was born March 22, 1890; Dove Leon was born February 5, 1892; Ruby Ann was born July 29, 1894; Greeta Cleora was born January 13, 1897; and Earl Nathaniel was born September 11, 1904. The first five were born in the same community in Van Buren County, but Earl was born at Marshall, Arkansas (Searcy County).

Papa carried the mail on horseback from Diamond to Marshall, a two day round trip. The Diamond post office was in our home and Mama took care of the business while Papa was on his two mail deliveries.

One of his trips was to Morrilton, where Papa spent the night with Mama's sister's family. Once the cousins had whooping cough, so a few days after Papa's return our family of kids all took the whooping cough. It was winter and Papa had carried the germs home in his heavy clothes.

In 1902 we moved to Marshall, Arkansas where Papa built a grocery store out on the edge of town. He had no power tools, so if a board was too wide, he ripped it, even if it was ten or twelve feet long. He was a good carpenter

but there was a lot of hard work to it.

The Missouri and North Arkansas R. R. was being built through Harrison, coming south through Marshall. Some of the crew laying the tracks were Greeks, and one of our memories of them was the outdoor ovens in which they baked their bread. Crossties for the roadbed were hauled in by farmers and woodsmen of the area, using wagons, many pulled by ox teams.

Papa's grocery store was across the road from the place where the depot was later built, so we had the best possible view of the work. I'll always remember the day the first train pulled into Marshall. People came from miles around to see the only train they'd ever witnessed.

In the store Papa sold anything anyone could need, except clothing. However, Mama had a millinery shop and made ladies' hats. Papa also bought butter, eggs, hides, and more often then not he took them in exchange for coffee, sugar, land and such. Papa put in a meat market and did his own butchering. Sugar was 20 lbs. for a dollar and came in a barrel. A scoop kept in the barrel dipped sugar into a brown paper bag until the scales balanced. I remember one old fellow who would come in to buy "A nickel's worth of sugar."

Our living quarters were in back of the store until Papa built a two story house on the same property. We always had family worship at night. We never missed Sunday School and church.

Papa had a young horse, named Buck, which he hitched to the delivery wagon to deliver meat, groceries and feed to folks all over town.

When it was banking time, Papa would make out his deposit slip, put the money in a half-gallon syrup pail and sent Greeta and me on the errand. Someone would have to lift the pail up onto the bank counter. In those days no one was afraid of being robbed. It was perfectly safe for two little girls to carry a bucket of money over to the local bank.

In 1906 Papa sold the store and home to a Mr. Nathaniel Horton. He then outfitted two covered wagons in which our family traveled to the western edge of "Indian Territory", known as Oklahoma. Our brother Walter did not go with us, a he had gone to Harrison to learn the watchmaking trade under Mr. C. L. Glines.

We crossed the Arkansas River on a pontoon bridge at Dardanelle, Arkansas as we proceeded to Fort Smith where we visited Papa's sister, Aunt Dora.

Once we left Arkansas we were in wild country inhabited by unfriendly Indians and outlaws. At night the two wagons pulled close together, facing each other, with the wagon tongues pushed under the other wagon. Papa would stretch a "wagon sheet" (tarpaulin) over the space between the wagons. He slept in one wagon with some of the children, and Mama was in the other with the rest of the familiy. Papa put lock and chains on the mules and horses so they were chained to the wagon wheels. Even with that precaution, someone got one horse loose and was untying the other when Papa managed to scare the thieves off.

The wagon Papa drove was large and heavy, pulled by a good big team of mules. Sister Dove, age 14, handled the light team of horses pulling a

"Vacation" trip into Missouri in 1900. Top row Ruby, Mama, Dove and Walter. In front, Edna in Papa's lap and Greeta in chair with Spot alongside.

smaller wagon.

We had homemade bread all the time. Mama always saved a "sponge" starter and would work the bread in the wagon as we traveled. At evening camp, Papa dup a big hole and burned any wood along with dry "cow chips" we could find until the ground got very hot. Next the coals were scooped out and Mama's big covered roaster pan of bread was lowered into the hole. A large piece of metal then covered the hole, the coals were piled on that cover, and other food was cooked there while the bread baked below.

. When we came to the Canadian River we waited, as we had been warned not to try to cross until some local person showed us where and how to cross. Many wagons and teams had been lost in the Canadian's quicksand. Even now, the name Canadian brings memories of how terrified we were. When a man on horseback crossed and showed Papa where to drive, he said, "Don't slow down, whip the team through fast so animals and the wagon wheels won't have time to settle in the sand." Papa drove the big wagon over, then hollered back to Sister, "Pour the bud to them", meaning to whip them through fast.

One night, while camped out at Ada, Oklahoma, we saw our first electric lights and running water.

We finally settled at Sentinel in Indian Territory. Papa built a two story store with living quarters upstairs. We were in Oklahoma when it became a state in 1907.

Of course we were on the plains where the wind blew all the time and little or no rain fell. Papa used to put me on a small horse and I'd hold the other horses' ropes while they grazed out back of the store at the edge of town. Seemed to me I spent hours just grazing those horses as there were no fences then. Our mule team had been sold.

Papa persuaded his parents to move to Sentinel from Oak Mountain near Diamond, Arkansas in Van Buren County. Grandpa Davis is buried at Sentinel. Dove married Ed Davidson at Sentinel.

Papa was a person who always thought far pastures were greener. He was a hard worker, but a poor manager. In 1903 the store was sold and we bought a farm about eight miles from Sayre, Oklahoma. Our post office was Doxey, Oklahoma, and the nearest railroad was at Rocky.

If it seemed dry before, we learned just how dry it can be. Papa said it never rained his hat full. Mama could not leave sheets on the line to dry. They had to be taken in sooner, or the wind would whip them to shreds. I remember that if an old hen turned her tail toward the wind, it would catch under the wings and blow her until she hit a fence or a something. Papa planted milo maize and, in spite of the weather, made a good crop. The cotton did not do so well.

One year of that dry farming was all Papa could take, so again we loaded into wagons and moved to Park Hill, Oklahoma, back near the Arkansas border. Sister Ruby stayed in Holdenville, Oklahoma with brother Walter to attend high school.

The place Papa rented, about five miles south of Tahlequah, was owned by a family named Johnson. There was a feud between the Johnsons and

Circa 1894, L. to R.: standing Dove Davis, Papa (William Davis), Mama Davis, Ida Kindred (cousin), Wyndal Kindred, Lorene Kindred and Dora Kindred. Seated, L. to R.: Grandpa Isaac Davis, Walter Davis, Grandma Martha Davis, Clara, Uncle Zack (Dr. Z. T. Kindred) and Grace Kindred.

their relatives, and all the buildings on the Johnson farm had been burned in retaliation for a killing of some kind.

Papa made wooden floors and three foot sides for two tents as living quarters. The tents were put up outside the walls and floors and proved quite cozy. One large tent served as the family living room and bedroom. The other tent was smaller and it became the kitchen-dining room. Papa put up a log chicken house. There were wild chickens all over the place, as when the buildings burned, the chickens were on their own. We would discover hen's nests everywhere, sometimes with a hen and a bunch of chicks.

Papa had a beautiful young team of black Percheron horses, a mare and a young stallion. Minnie was easy to handle, but Mage was different. Papa was afraid for us kids to be around him. One day when Papa was plowing down in the field, Mama told me to take him some water, so I put a saddle on Mage and took the jug of water to Papa. He nearly fainted when he saw me riding that young stallion. After that, I rode him lots of times, but Papa never did.

Ruby attended normal school in Tahlequah (now Northeastern State University). She got her degree to teach and her first school was at "Hungry Mountain" where most of the pupils were Indian. She should write a book on some of the things that took place there.

Since we never stayed in one place more than one or two years, we just didn't have time to form real friendships. It is sad for children to have no childhood memories of playmates and friends—maybe that is why I've always felt like a "loner".

Again, Papa wanted to move on. He came back to Arkansas and rented a farm a mile west of Cane Hill. This time we moved by train on a railroad that ran from Fayetteville to Muskogee, Oklahoma. Abandoned many years ago, it was called the Oklahoma and Cherokee Central, or O&CC. Papa rented a boxcar, loaded stock in one end of it and all our possessions, including farm tools, in the other end. By renting the boxcar, the family was allowed to ride in the caboose. The train got into Lincoln, Arkansas about midnight, our car was sidetracked, and we spent the rest of the night in a hotel.

There was one less in the family again. Sister Ruby was teaching school in Oklahoma and had married Robert Murray there. Greeta and I walked a mile to school. Earl was too young to go. School was held in what had been Cane Hill College. The second story of the building was a large auditorium and there we also attended Sunday School and church.

Cane Hill had a hand hewn stone church, the Cumberland Presbyterian church which is still in use; in fact, it is the only church there. In 1912 I attended the wedding of Lon Moore and Myrtle McClellan there.

On our place was an orchard so we had plenty of fresh fruit, canned and dried apples, and peaches. We always had a good garden and raised our own hogs and chickens for meat. We also had milk cow, so we "lived at home" mostly. Mama made our clothes. Papa did his own blacksmithing. He always shod his horses and did all the repair work, so there was very little

spending money needed. We bought flour and sugar, but I don't remember my folks drinking coffee. Papa and we kids would shell corn, then Papa put it in a heavy, long canvas bag called a "grain sack". By dividing the grain in half, he could tie the sack across the back of the saddle. I'd ride our old gray mare (Papa called her Zilphia) to the Cane Hill mill with this load, where it was ground into meal. Only the mill's water wheel now stands, about a mile south of Cane Hill—the rest of the mill is just a memory. In October of 1912 Papa rented a farm four miles northwest of Fayetteville from August Koenigsbruck, a cabinet maker who had fled Germany to avoid going into the German army.

The place was in the Mt. Comfort school district and there was, and still is, a Presbyterian church there. Mr. Koenigsbruck had cows, so besides farming, Papa took care of the stock, milked the cows and ran the cream separator. Cleaning that separator was a job that usually fell to me and I hated it.

Greeta was staying with Ruby at Welling, Oklahoma and going to school, so Earl and I were the only children in this move. Seems we lost one family member every move. Greeta came home when school was out. I attended school at Mt. Comfort, and we all went to church there. It was a long mile and a half, but I walked to school. Earl did not start until the next fall.

The Mt. Comfort community was a closely knit group, but we soon made friends, many of whom have remained that through the years for me. In fact, when I was 15 I met Gus Henbest, a handsome young fellow who three years later became my husband. Most of our 47 years of married life were spent in or near the Mt. Comfort community.

Papa still wanted to move on. He rented a farm near Sulphur City, about ten miles southeast of Fayetteville. While waiting for the farm to be vacated, we moved into a house on North Leverett Street for three months. I started high school at the University High School (called Peabody Hall). The teachers were college students doing their practice teaching. It was great, for the teachers were all young and working hard for grades themselves.

When the time came for the move to Sulphur City, Papa rented a room for me in the home of Mrs. Thomason for $5.00 a month. It was at the corner of Dickson and Duncan, just across from the campus. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Schroder lived in the downstairs apartment. I stayed there until school was out, then went home for the summer. I paid 5¢ for a loaf of bread and 7¢ for a quart of milk.

For the next school year, my second year in high school, I stayed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Parker on Church Street. I helped with housework, mainly washing dishes and dusting. Mrs. Parker did the cooking. She also included my laundry with her family's wash, and I did most of the ironing.

Papa next moved to a farm northeast of West Fork. Its attraction was a strong spring coming out of a small cave. There a stone spring house kept all our milk, butter, and other foods refrigerated.

In July of 1916, Grandpa Braudaway died, followed a month later by Grandma Braudaway. Both were 70 years old. They were buried at Center

Ridge, Arkansas. In August of that year, Grandpa Davis died suddenly at age 82, and was buried at Sentinel, Oklahoma.

In the fall of 1916, brother Walter bought 40 acres of land two miles north of Winslow, and in October of 1916 we moved into the log house on the place. It had a lovely fireplace, and Mama would use a dutch oven to bake wonderful cornbread, sweet potatoes in the bottom with spareribs or pork backbones on the top. We lost another one on this move: Greeta had married Charles Campbell.

Photo of Gus Henbest age 15, by Grabill Studio, Fayetteville. April 15, 1909

We went to church at Valley Grove school house. Earl attended school there. That fellow Gus Henbest whom I mentioned had a new buggy and a fine horse. So he would drive the 20 miles down to see me on Sunday. It was a long drive. So, on March 29, 1918, Gus talked a friend, Floyd Paul, who was a rural mail carrier with a Ford car, into driving him and a preacher, Alex Kilgore, down to our home. We were married in the living room with Papa, Mama, Earl, Floyd Paul, Miss Lizzie Jones and the preacher present—six witnesses. Another one gone; only Earl left at home.

Gus had hitched his horse and buggy to a post alongside of Lewis Brothers Hardware Store, so Floyd let us out there. We got in the buggy and drove four miles to the house where Gus lived on the Koenigsbruck farm—the same house where I had lived a few years before.

That was our honeymoon trip, but the honeymoon lasted 47 years and two months. Gus died May 22, 1964.

QUERIES

Tommie Mannon, 905 S.E. 8th, Wagoner, OK 74467 would like to have information on Carrie BREWER of Gentry who married a Thomas M. ASHER of Johnson, Washington County. The marriage was on July 7, 1903. She was 20 and he was 18 at the time.

Cliff & Debbie Miller, P.O. Box 7442, Canyon Lake, CA 92380 desire information on William WELLS, born ca 1829 possibly in Illinois, married 17 Feb. 1856 in AR to Mary Jane SHORES, daughter of Wm. D. Shores and Elizabeth HUTCHENS. Wells was supposedly shot for desertion (possibly in Texas) while in the Confederate Army. Also desire information on: Anderson THOMAS, b. 1851-1853, son of Marchant Thomas, married 3 July 1870 to Sarah Jane McLAUGHLIN, daughter of Robert McLaughlin and Mary A?. All lived in Washington and Crawford Counties in Arkansas.

Is it possible to obtain information on Shores Lake and Cemetery and any of the old IOOF lodges in Franklin and Washington Counties. Especially interested in Beverly Lodge.

Mary and Charles G. Bowen, 4885 Academy Street, San Diego, CA 92109 are interested in exchanging information with anyone researching the family CROW. George Washington Crow, son of John Crow, died suddenly in July 1883 in Washington County, Arkansas. Where is he buried? G.W. Crow's wife Nancy HOWARD was left with several young children.

Also wish to correspond with anyone who is related or could help with information regarding John W.P. PAYNE and his wife Rebecca BARD/BAIRD who were married in Washington Co., AR 21 Dec. 1871. Her parents were James and Rachel Bard/Baird. Did John and Rebecca Payne live in Washington Co. after they were married? Rebecca had a brother George and there were probably other older brothers and sisters who were married before the Bard family appeared in the 1870 Washington Co. census. One sister, Amanda Jane Bard, m. 1869 to Wm. Vanburen DYER of Washington Co. Did Rebecca's father James die in the Civil War? Probably in Missouri before the family came to Washington County, AR before 1870. Please help!

A. Earl Griffith, 12223 East 38th Street, Tulsa, OK 74146-3113, needs help with the family of David and Winnie Qualls GRIFFITH. Also the family of Ina THOMPSON (age 10 on the 1880 census of Washington County). Need the family of James C. and Mary M. GILLILAND ca 1880.

Tom Brewer, 2785 South 136 Place, Tulsa, OK 74134 says: I am looking for descendants of Joel Henry FERGUSON, the son of Joel M. Ferguson and Emily WILLIAMS who were married 1 January 1860 in Washington County. They are listed in Prairie Township on the 1880 census as: Ferguson, Joel M. age 39, Emily age 37, John S. age 19, J. Henry age 17, James M. age 14, William T. age 12, Samuel H. age 8, Martha E. age 3,

Amanda age 1/12. Joel Henry married Cleo JAMES on 27 January 1884 in Washington County. Cleo CRAVENS James was born about 1862.

Who were the parents of Cleopatra Matilda and John William Cravens (CRAVINES)? Cleo was born about 1862 and John W. on 8 Sept. 1865 in Fayetteville. Were they Meredith C. Cravines and Martha MOON who were married 16 July 1860 in Washington County?

John Carver, Route 4, Ridge Road, Canton, GA 30114 offers to members of our Society access to more than sixteen thousand cemetery inscriptions, as well as obituaries, census indices, marriages, wills and other courthouse records of Cherokee County, Georgia. He also offers to members who are descendants of Thomas MONROE who left Cherokee County, GA and settled in Washington County access to his records of the Holly Springs Cemetery, now in Pickens County, where Thomas Monroe's parents and other relatives are buried. Write to him!

Ima Jean Sams, Route 2, Wetumka, OK 74883 needs help searching the FURLOW and MORRISON families. These families resided in the Winslow area. Grandmother Zona Furlow was born there on 30 January 1883. Zona had a half brother, Jim Morrison, who was born at Fort Gibson, OK in 1896.

* *

History of Cincinnati, Arkansas recently published. Hardbound, more than 300 pages, hundreds of pictures, 80+ family histories; also reproductions of many historical documents. Contact Cincinnati Extension Homemakers Club, c/o Juanita Wilson, Route 1, Box 58, Summers, AR 72769. $25.00 per copy plus $2.50 for mailing ($2.00 each in multiples.)

* *

BOOK OF "SAYINGS" PUBLISHED

The Goingsnake District Heritage Association has just published a small book of "Sayings." It is a collection of over 800 expressions used by our ancestors to describe things, give advice, predict the weather, etc. Have you seen it "Colder than a mother-in-law's kiss?" Or known someone who was "No bigger than a bar of soap after a hard day's washing?" Have you eaten "'possum apples", "cackleberries", "hickory chickens", or drank "blue john?"

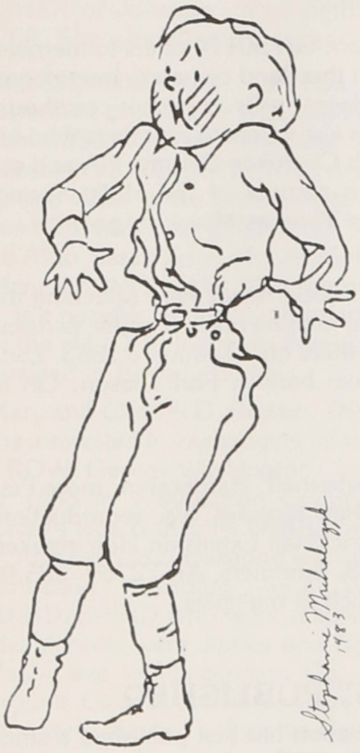
The book is edited by Virgil Talbot, Editor of *The Goingsnake Messenger*. All proceeds from the book goes to G.D.H.A. to further preserve and publish the history of the area. The book is 50 pages, 8½x5½, paperback with taped binding.

Single copies may be ordered by mail for $4.00 postpaid. The address is: Goingsnake District Heritage Assn., P.O. Box 180, Westville, OK 74965. Or pickup a copy for $3.00 ea. at the Westville (OK) Library or the Talbot Library and Museum, located near Colcord, OK.

* *

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

by David M. Greer



THE SKEPTIC

Lewis never believed anything he was told — not even what he read — unless he confirmed it by personal experience. I, on the otherhand, believed everything I read and everything my relatives and teacher told me. Like the red queen, I practiced believing three impossible — or at least contradictory — things before breakfast. Perhaps not every day, but at least once a week. It has been a handicap to me all of my life.

Mother bought us knickers to replace our overalls when we "dressed up". The knickers had belt loops, but we had no belts. Mother observed, "You have no hips to hold up a belt. We'll just make button holes, and button them to your shirts". Which she did.

We thought it was a disgrace. Clarence and Denton Thurman, up the road to Wedington, had belts. Why couldn't we? I found a piece of rope and threaded it through the loops and tied it, but Lewis wasn't satisfied. "That's not a belt" he said scornfully. I saw him eyeing Blackie's collars. (Blackie was our dog — no watchdog, no guard-dog, just a family dog). I cautioned, "No. It's too small" but he wouldn't believe it.

So Lewis took Blackie's collar off, and tried it around his waist. It barely reached, belt tip to buckle. There wasn't a chance of fastening it. Lewis took the collar and headed for the harness room in the barn, where he knew there was an awl. He made a hole about a half-inch from the end of the collar, worked the buckle tongue through it, and wallowed it about until it slipped in readily. Then he passed the belt through the loops on his knickers, let all the air in his lungs, sucked in his guts, and pulled the ends together desperately. And lo! He had a belt!

He also had a problem. His guts were where his lungs were supposed to be. He couldn't take a deep breath. In fact, he couldn't even take a good shallow breath. He couldn't get hold of the end of the "belt" in the buckle. He couldn't blow out enough air to loosen the "belt". He couldn't even holler for help, and he was getting blue in the face.

I scooted for Mother. She came running, but she couldn't get her fingers between Blackie's collar and Lewis' belly. He turned bluer. Mother scurried to the backyard and rang the big bell hanging in the walnut tree. I saw Dad stop the plow, on the far side of the east forty, unhitch the mule and gallop bareback across the plowed field. He got there in a hurry to cut the leather tip behind the buckle. Lewis had no belt. Blackie no collar. Poor Lewis. If only he had listened to me!

One winter day Grandmother, who was a fount of useful information, remarked, "Boys, remember, never put your wet hand on cold iron. It will freeze right to it. Your Uncle Rufe once stuck his tongue to a frosted pump handle and had a time getting it loose." That seemed to me a good thing to know — useful fact, to be filed away for future guidance.

The next morning after breakfast — I had just broken the ice in the horsetrough so the mule colt could get a drink — there was a peculiar muffled squawking noice from the backyard. Mother came out, to find Lewis with his tongue and upper lip frozen fast to the end of the pump handle.

Grandmother arrived with a kettle of warm water. After she had poured it on the pump handle, (also Lewis' chin and face) for a few minutes, he came loose. Lewis lisped for a few days.

I heard Mother tell Grandmother "Please, **please** don't **ever** tell Lewis not to put beans up his nose!"

THE CREEK IN SUMMER

The creek was freedom. The creek was adventure. It was not a big stream. Mother said it was only a spring branch, but to us it was The Creek. It rose from springs in Clyde Thomason's farm to the east of our woods, flowed through our place in a little valley, bouncing from a bluff on one side to a bluff on the other.

Lewis and I had named each part of it. There was Blue Hole, against one bluff and under its overhang, deep, deep water. It came up to our waists when we went "swimming." There was Sycamore Hole, where the current had undercut the roots of a big tree. Here were fish — big fish — lurking in the darkness between the roots. We knew they were there. We hadn't seen them but it was such a likely place that they just **had** to be there. It was there we always started our fishing with high hopes. Near by was Sunperch Hole, maybe 18 inches deep, but the sunperch were always there. We caught them and carried them home to the frying pan. And finally Crawdad Place, a shallows of flat rocks where we gathered our fishbait.

The creatures of the creek were our entertainment. There was a path through the briarpatch beside Sunperch Hole. Once I met a skunk on that path. I backed into the briars to wait until he minced daintily by, not even raising his tail. At a hole below water level in the limestone bluff at Blue Hole, I once, reached in for a sunperch I'd seen enter. I grabbed a snake's body! It scared me so that I ran all the way down to Sycamore Hole. I'd been told water moccasins didn't bite under water, but I wasn't sure the venomous moccasins knew that. I'm still not sure.

There was a pair of kingfishers diving for minnows. A pair of shitepokes

stood in the shallows, then stabbed, and flew off with tidbits for the little ones. Once I found a whippoorwill's eggs — two of them — on a bare leafy patch in the woods near the creek. Did you know that the whippoorwill doesn't build a nest, just lays her eggs on the ground? When she is setting on the eggs, she looks like a knot on a fallen branch, or a twig of oak leaves. You would never see her; but if you come too close, off she goes with a crippled wing, not quite able to fly, just barely keeping ahead of a small boy until she has lured you far away from those eggs. Suddenly she recovers her health and is off into the forest on silent wings. Where were those eggs? You can't remember.

Our specialty was snakes. We were respectful of water moccasins, as well as copperheads, and we never saw a rattlesnake on our place. There were two or three kinds of harmless water snakes, which could be distinguished from moccasins by the shape of the head. We usually left them alone because you **could** make a mistake. Dad told us the fellow who said everybody was entitled to one mistake didn't know water moccasins, the notorious "cottonmouths."

There were blacksnakes, greensnakes, blue racers, kingsnakes, and gartersnakes, also a dozen or so other kinds. We got to know them all. One of the strangest was the hog-nosed snake. When you disturb the hog-nosed snake, he swells up, flattens his body behind his head so he looks like a cobra, and hisses like a dragon. In fact, he makes himself so formidable looking he is commonly called a "puff adder". Among our neighbors he was generally believed to be deadly poisonous. But he's not. He's a big bluffer. Lewis and I were thought by our neighbors to be either awfully brave or plumb ignorant.

The hog-nosed snake has yet another trick. If you catch him, or swat him with a small stick, he will play dead — "sull" like a possum. To prove he is really dead, this snake will turn over, belly up, and sometimes regurgitate a half-digested grasshopper to cinch his case. He is stubborn. If you turn him over, right side up, he will flip back over immediately.

I know you have heard of the hoop snake. It puts its tail into its mouth, forms a hoop, and rolls away faster than a man can run. It has a stinger in its tail. Sometimes it sticks its stinger into a tree, and the tree dies. Several of our neighbors knew somebody who had talked to somebody else who had actually seen a hoop snake.

But, you know and I know the hoop snake is a myth. What you may not know is that this myth — like many others — has a small basis in fact.

Look in a Guide to Snakes for the Glass Snake. He is already operating under an alias. He looks just like a snake, but he isn't. The Glass Snake is a legless lizard. It has ear holes, which snakes lack. It has scar-like scales where its ancestors' legs used to be. Besides it has a habit that confirms the difference if you have ever played with blue-tailed lizards.

Catch, or even frighten a blue-tailed lizard, and it quickly sheds its long tail. The tail starts thrashing around violently, which draws your attention. When you look for the lizard again, it's gone! If you happen to find him again, a couple of weeks later, he will have a new tail. It will be shorter, stub-

bier and sharp-tipped. A new tail with a different look. In fact, you might think it looks like a stinger.

The Glass Snake has a great long tail, longer than its body, and he does the same trick, in memory of his lizard ancestry. When his short, pointed new tail grows out, it does look like a stinger, so much so, most people who see him will think him an entirely different kind of snake.

He is rare enough to maintain his anonymity as a basis for a legend. But I'll be darned if I know how he got his hoopy reputation.

VISITORS

The road past our farm was not a main travelled route, but it did serve as a way to go west from Fayetteville if you wanted to get to Siloam Springs, or to Watts, Oklahoma. It came through Wedington Gap in the hills, and our farm was somewhere near midway between Wedington, just west of the gap, and Cincinnati, over by the Oklahoma line. The route for the road — most any road through the hill country, for that matter, was determined by gaps in the hills, by ridges, thru valleys, and by places where horses with buggy or wagon could ford the streams. Bridges were few to be found only on the main roads.

Still, we had some through traffic on our road. Few of our neighbors came past our place. When they had to go to the store — which wasn't often — those east of us went to Wedington, and those west, to Cincinnati. So, there was a good chance that any passerby would be a stranger. Lewis and I kept a good watch. Each passing rider or vehicle was an event.

Of course the postman came every day except Sunday, we would race down the hill to the mailbox, and back up the hill with the mail. Did you know that we had junk mail even in those days? I used to wonder how Dad could throw mail in the woodbox without even opening it. The arrangement was better then: the junk mail made good kindling which helped Mother get the fire started in the kitchen stove in the morning. Nowadays it has to be picked up and hauled off: a burden to the tax payer.

There was another regular traveler, who came by perhaps once a month, to stop at every house along the way. He was the Watkins man, a salesman type, attending a sleepy horse and a special buggy with bins, pigeon holes, and secret compartments, all built into the part of the buggy behind the seat. The Watkins man was the housewife's friend. He sold vanilla and lemon extract, cloves, ginger, cinnamon, and other spices, black pepper, bay leaves, cream of tartar, and I don't know what else. But Mother knew, and was always out of something by the time he arrived. Mother thought he was important. So did the hired man: the Watkins wagon had snuff, chewing tobacco, and Prince Albert smoking tobacco. And Lewis and I thought so, because there were jelly beans, lemon drops, and licorice-flavored jawbreakers in that traveling emporium. Yes, the Watkins man was one of the treasured amenities of farm life.

Down the lane by the mailbox about three city blocks from the house the road crossed the creek. There stood the spring house back against the fern-

covered bluff where the springwater gushed out. On the other side of the creek was a little sycamore grove on about a half-acre of level ground. It was not fenced off from the road. It was here through travelers would sometimes stop to feed and water their horses, and perhaps eat a lunch of crackers and cheese or sardines from the store at Wedington or Cincinnati. If there were children with them, Lewis and I would go fishing, very casually, sitting on our side of the creek and paying more attention to the strangers than to the fishing. We were shy. But if the strangers stayed a while — occasionally they stopped overnight, sleeping in the wagon — we were usually acquainted and playing together after an hour or two.

One afternoon there was a clattering and a flurry of voices from down in the grove. Just as Lewis and I were about to investigate, the telephone rang a long and two shorts — our ring. We waited, to see what was doing. It was old Mrs. Henderson at the next farm west of us.

She said, "Mrs. Greer, did you see them wagons come past a little while ago?"

Mother told her "No, I didn't see them. But maybe they stopped down by our spring house. We can hear voices down there now."

"Mrs. Greer, them's Gypsies. Ever few years they come through, and they camp down by your creek. If'n I was you, I'd bring your milk and butter up to the house — unless you got a God's plenty of 'em. And I'd lock the barn door and the henhouse tonight."

Mother told her, "Many thanks," and sent us boys down to the spring house. "Take this basket" she said. "Put everything in it but one jug of milk and a bucket of eggs. If we leave something there, maybe they won't come up here looking." So we did. There were three covered wagons, and two camp fires, and some kids. We didn't go back down there to fish. Mother wouldn't let us.

When Dad got in from the orchard, Mother told him about it. "Dane," she said, "you'd better put hasps and padlocks on the barn and chicken house doors tonight."

Dad said "Shep will let us know if anybody comes around in the night. Anyway, I haven't got two hasps and padlocks. We will just have to listen to whatever Shep tells us."

Shep didn't tell us a thing that night or the next (the Gypsies stayed two nights). Mother counted the chickens next day and the next, but that didn't help much because she didn't know exactly how many she had to start. She reported, "Well, I **think** they are all there." Also, the jug of milk and the bucket of eggs in the springhouse stayed right where they had been left.

The second day, at breakfast, Dad asked, "Mary, how many guineas do we have?" She said "Eight. Anyway, they sleep in the trees. We don't have to worry about them."

Dad said "That was yesterday. How many do we have this morning?"

"Why, eight, I suppose." She stopped, then got up and went out. In a little while she came back, sat down, and said "Six."

Dad said "the other two are probably around. Count them tonight when they go to roost."

She did. Six. Dad said "If they are gone, maybe an owl took them. After all, they insist on roosting in trees."

Mother flounced out of the room saying "Yes! A two-legged owl, I'll bet!"

Dad winked at me and said "I wonder how many legs she thinks a hoot owl has?"

FROSTED CLOVER

One cold October morning Mother called to Dad, who has harnessing the mules to the mowing machine. "Dane, the cows are in the clover field." He came running and looked. Sure enough, four cows had found a low spot in the split-rail fence. Two of them were already lying down. They didn't look right because they weren't lying on their bellies, with legs folded under, but they were on their sides, heads to the ground. I asked Dad "What's the matter with them?" He said "frosted clover", took off running, so I followed.

We found both cows bloated, bellies so distended that they looked as if they were going to burst. They were obviously in pain.

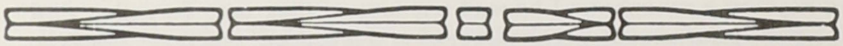
Dad went to the cow that looked worst, and measured along her flank from her hipbone, using a hand-span as a unit of measurement. When he had located the right place, he took out his pocket knife, opened the long blade, and thrust it into the distended side all of the way. There was a hiss, and gas jetted out, as the bloated body subsided. Dad went to the other cow. performed the same operation, but while she was deflating, the first one heaved to her feet—and began eating the frosted clover again. Dad hollered at me "Hey! Don't let her eat! Chase her back into the pasture." I did as told. Dad soon followed me, driving number two.

I suppose every farmer knew of this hazard and its cure. I had never heard of it before. I never have found out just why frosted clover has this effect. But another time, in another year, we were passing through Zack Thomason's pasture on the road to Siloam Springs, and saw one of his cows down in a clover field next to the pasture. We stopped, Dad did his operation, and the bloated form subsided like a punctured tire. But this time the gas jet was a geyser of green froth. Dad muttered, "Unh-oh! not quite the right place."

I asked "Will she be all right?" Dad shrugged "I think so."

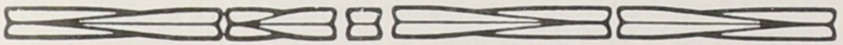
That afternoon, coming back from town, we saw her back in the pasture, grazing on grass.

I don't know if Zack ever knew about Dad's rescue of that cow.



To be Without a History is like Being Forgotten....
To be Forgotten Must be the Worst Fate of All

From "Recollections of Summers on a New England Farm" by Donald Hall



BILL LUTHER, MUSICIAN

As told to "Gerry Sloan has been on the music faculty at the University of Arkansas for the past sixteen years. He has served primarily as Professor of Trombone and Low Brass Instruments. His articles on jazz have appeared in leading periodicals.

My name is Bill Luther. I was born October 10, 1911 in Kansas City, MO, adopted and brought down to Arkansas by my parents, Dr. and Mrs. C. H. Luther. I grew up in Fayetteville where I went to school. I didn't enter school until I was seven years old because, at the starting age for school, I was living on a farm with my mother in Pennsylvania. She didn't want me to go to its proverbial "little red schoolhouse". But she located the books used in the school and began teaching me. In Fayetteville I entered Mary Shelton's private school on Dickson St., skipped the first grade and graduated from sixth grade at the First Christian Church on College Ave. On to Fayetteville High School, when it was on School and Center. That location is now the senior citizens' high rise. I graduated in 1928.

In the fall I entered the University of Arkansas College of Arts and Sciences. Then they believed in giving you a general cultural education. You didn't know how to do anything specific when you got out, but you had to go through their curriculum. Dr. Virgil Jones was the dean at that time. I sweated along, had to take a language, so I settled for German, of all things. I was in a class of mostly graduate students. That's the one time I learned to sleep through classes. My German class was at 1:00, right after lunch. A full tummy and a boring class — I learned to sleep real well. Dr. Lussky was my teacher. He had a nervous disorder in his throat, so his voice quivered and quavered a lot. I never could tell whether he was talking German or English, making things even more confusing, but no more interesting.

In 1926 Dad more or less twisted my arm. He started me studying with Mrs. Hurst, a music teacher in Fayetteville. She was located on Spring St., immediately west of College Ave. I took about three piano lessons. Tucking my thumb under for that third note made me look like a pterodactyl learning to fly. I quit real quick. Dad next bought me a C-melody saxophone at Guisingers. For some reason I took to it like crazy. He had me learn to play the instrument with Owen C. Mitchell, whom I knew as a piano teacher. Mitchell knew some of the saxophone's basic fingerings, but even today there are keys on a saxophone I haven't any idea of their use. To gather dust? However, I was obsessed with playing it and practiced, practiced, practiced.

There was no air conditioning. When the weather became hot, I would sit out on the front porch. Meanwhile, we'd moved from College Ave. out to Olive St. People would phone requests to play such-and-such a number from 'way up on Mt. Sequoyah when I'd be a-sittin' in the shade, blowing away.

Some of the first jazz-type music I remember hearing as a kid was an orchestra made up of black people from "tin cup town" in Fayetteville. They

called themselves The Black Diamond Serenaders. They had no piano, of course, but they went around to different places and performed. I remember them stopping at our home there on College Ave. a few times and playing some numbers for us. The music was called "ragtime", I believe, in that particular era.

I continued lessons with Mitchell, on the C-melody sax. The only place he could use me in his orchestra, just for teaching purposes, was to play violin parts. I didn't know anything went as high above the staff as some violin parts did. And sharps — boy, were there sharps! Later I got Dad to let me trade the C-melody into Guisinger's for an Eb alto which I played for a number of years. With that change, I started playing in Mitch's second band, called the Razorbacks. Later, I thought up the name Varsity Club for an orchestra which Harry Hurst (son of the music teacher) and I had.

About our first trip out of town as an orchestra was to Tahlequah. The trip seemed awful long and was really something to talk about. Later, we went on to Muskogee. I was really in charge of the band then. It was standard procedure if you played a piece and people seemed to like it, you'd repeat two or three choruses — rather than play music in sets, as has been done for so many years. In our case, the first time everything sounded fine. But during the encore there were very few people playing. I glanced around. Ray Roberts, our trombone player, was out dancing with one of the girls. Another fellow was passed out behind the bandstand. Others were pretty well bent out of shape, too. I complained bitterly, because I believed if we were taking money for a job they ought to stay sober enough to play. They agitated me out of the band for a while, saying I was a troublemaker, having such a belief.

My only music instruction, since there was no band in the high school, was the six months of lessons with Owen Mitchell. He showed me the basic fingerings of the saxophone, and he did make me learn to read. I could play by ear, and thought that would do, but he insisted that I learn to read.

The University was an ROTC type of school then. You either had to march in the band or carry a rifle. That was the only brass band I ever performed with. Honestly, I never gave a toot for brass bands. Every so often we'd have to march on the campus in front of Old Main. I used a clarinet when I played in the band, rather than a saxophone. I'd go marching along with it, reading a little bit of music held in place on the lyre, and step in a chughole. It felt as if the clarinet's mouthpiece was going out the back of my neck!

Backing up a bit. KUOA, the only radio station in northwest Arkansas then, was on campus. Located immediately south of what was then the business administration building. A fellow named Rudy Foutz was director of the University band — our ROTC band. As I said, I disliked band music, so Foutz used a carrot-and-stick approach with me. "If you'll do such-and-such at this band practice, we'll take you on a trip to New Orleans." He didn't realize it, but I would have bought my way out of going. There was a dance I wanted to play in Fayetteville. I just would not go to band rehearsal. At one time, the powers that were in charge made Foutz give a final exam.

So he rehearsed us on the meanings of some words. I know fort-iss-iss-iss-issimo, because as you keep adding "isses", it means more than before. That's the summation of my education from band instruction.

To back up even more, I never really learned to count music as one should. To me everything was either a slow or fast waltz (I could go romping along on a six-eight march — it was a fast waltz) plus a fast or slow foxtrot. Some music I couldn't read, but the fellow next to me was playing the same part. So I put notes on the page to fit what he was doing, thus managing to fake it through.

We played a great deal for University dances — tea dances for sororities and fraternities at their respective houses, and many other student dances. Before my time, the dances were held in the southwest corner of Old Main in its basement. I remember watching through the window and listening to Bennie Moten, a black musician and jazz band leader, when he was there. I played a few dances with Mitch later on when the dance floor of Old Main was in the basement's northwest corner. Once the girls' gymnasium was built all dances were held in it for many years.

Mitch's band had everything sewed up in the dance business at the time. The band looked like a nondescript bunch of bums. They probably got their tuxes cleaned at the beginning of the season. The tuxes looked like they were slept in from that date on. They used a fold-up old wire rack music stand. Their socks hung down over their shoes most of the time. One of the sax men, son of a banker in Fayetteville, had the seat of his pants worn out, so he covered his exposure with a trench coat wherever he went.

Harry and I got us a job playing the Tri Delt sorority's formal. I don't remember the year. We went up to the Elks' Club (we played many dances there on West Center). The Elks loaned us some of their movable platforms. We tied these on my dad's old Buick and drove over to the girls' gym. We hauled those heavy things in and set up the band on different levels, just as we'd seen in pictures of big orchestras. Harry managed to borrow what was called "funeral grass" (there was no such thing then as astroturf) from the Nelson-Savage Funeral home. We thought our setup was beautiful! We freshly pressed our tuxes and wore white carnation boutonnieres. From then on, we got most of the jobs. Mitch was forced to go to Tulsa to find playing jobs.

Back in the late twenties, most of the sorority and fraternity houses were on College Ave. Later, many of them were on Church St., between Spring and Dickson. We played lots of tea dances at these different houses, for both the girls and the men students. At the time Sigma Chi was on College Ave. Later we played for them when they moved to their yellow brick house on Maple St., at the foot of the hill coming down from Mt. Nord. Then, too, quite a few houses were on Arkansas Ave. We played at Carnall Hall, the girls' dormitory. And at Alpha Gamma Rho, which was on the street running just east of Evergreen Cemetery.

Still later, the Chi Omegas put their house on Maple St., with the Pi Phis on Oakland, and the Tri Delts built on Maple. The music played for the dances was mostly the pop tunes of the day. We bought a lot of the stock ar-

rangements, but then we wrote quite a few of them, too. When I was with Harry (Hurst), he wrote many fine arrangements. Incidentally, he is still alive and living out in Colorado Springs, CO.

Harry and I called our orchestra the "Varsity Club". We played all over. I remember particularly Lake Frances, just outside of Siloam Springs. At the time it was a summer resort called Forest Park with lots of possibilities, but it never did seem to take off. They imported a few good bands. One band was quite well known at the time, especially in hotel circles, and was called Sonny Clapp's Orchestra. Two or three musicians in that band eventually made quite a name for themselves, including Irving Fazola. Anyway, our group played Lake Frances many a time.

In uptown Fayetteville, on West Center St., over what was then the Smelser-Eason feed and grain store, was a hall at the back where the Elks' Club held forth. We performed for many, many dances there. Then too, there was the third floor of the Ozark Theater building where the nurses of the City Hospital nursing school held a dance every Monday night.

ARKANSAS TRAVELERS, OWEN C. MITCHELL, PIANIST AND DIRECTOR
STATION KUOA, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, AT FAYETTEVILLE

This picture of Owen Mitchell's orchestra, the Arkansas Travellers, was made up on the second floor of Guisinger's Music Store which was at the southeast corner of the square. But that location wasn't the first Guisinger store. The first was on the west side of the square, just a bit north of where the Fayetteville Drug Store is now. Next, they went to the east side of the square in what used to be Baum's Dept. Store, where they remained for a long time. Then they moved to the southeast corner where they stayed for more than fifty years, I've been told. I knew his boys real well, and my dad used to go fishing a lot with I. W. Guisinger, the gentleman who originally started the business. That last building they bought was once a Nash agency.

Mitch used to broadcast at intervals from the KUOA studio on the cam-

pus. It was located in a little gray wooden square building. When you walked in there, your ears started feeling funny because the walls were covered with heavy blanketing. It was so anechoic that you thought you were in another world. All of us broadcasted at different times from KUOA. For a while I played a little guitar and sang on a fifteen minute program. Radio talent was hard to come by!

I hadn't been playing alto sax very long when there was some kind of a talent show at the Ozark Theatre. They had me playing the waltz "Diane", which later was used as the theme song of Janet Gaynor's picture "Seventh Heaven". I somehow managed to get through that, and it was about the extent of what I could tootle then. Later there was another talent show for which they had me gather an orchestra. We were down in the pit in front of the stage playing something. As there were no microphones then, I had to sing through a megaphone. The song was something from "Babes in Toyland" — "Toyland, toyland, dear little girl and boy land." I cringed as I stood singing. The kids from the local talent show were up on stage prancing around, but I couldn't see them over the lip of the stage.

We used to have a lot of chautauqua shows come through and play the Ozark. I remember a fellow named Thireau Laurence who lectured and played Indian music he had composed. He blew into a big wooden flute, supposedly like the Indian uses. Another fellow who had nothing to do with music, was a Polish refugee from the first World War, called Count de Prorock. He was the leader of the first motorized crossing of the Sahara Desert. The *National Geographic* had a big write-up about the trip in 1923 or 1924. At that time our old family home was at 11 North College Ave., right across from the Ozark Theater. I recall Henry Tovey, the head of the music department at the University, I. W. Guisinger, Dad and myself all came over to our house after the show. We had a get-together discussing what each thought about it. I wasn't into music myself at that time.

Another act playing the Ozark which my dad wanted me to be sure to hear was called the "Six Brown Brothers". It was a saxophone ensemble. They were well known and popular on the theater circuit. At that time you could get a saxophone in colors, and they had black-and-white checkerboard designs on theirs! I don't know what was used to put the color on, but I'm certain it didn't help the tonal quality. I remember Buescher had some instruments that were a kind of orchid color, and orange, and red, and green. However, ninety-nine percent of the instruments were frosted silver on the outside with a pale gold plate inside the bell. The Brown Brothers used a bass saxophone, a baritone, a tenor, an alto, and a soprano, doubling up on one of these horns to make a sixth.

Bass saxophones were not too prevalent then, but along in the twenties came Adrian Rollini with his orchestra. I collected everything recorded by him that I could find. Had a lot of Red Nichols with his cornet, too, as well as Glenn Miller with his trombone. The great Miff Mole, another trombonist, was one of the best known early recording stars, and later Jack Teagarden, a great jazz singer and trombone player. To my mind, Adrian was really fine on the bass saxophone. I still have many of those records, some of which I

bought in Fayetteville over fifty or sixty years ago. Lots of them were bought from Harris Furniture on the first floor of what is now City Hall. They started with furniture, of course, but later featured a line of Edison phonographs. Some Okeh recordings I bought early on had Louis Armstrong, among others. Many of these I have kept. I've hung on to them until they're collectors items, most of them all scratched, but they still sound wonderful!

When I was sixteen or seventeen I took a job with an orchestra down in Hot Springs, AR at the Hotel Majestic. We left Fayetteville by the 6 a.m. train. Got down there around noon. I sat in third chair for them to broadcast from KTHS. Found me a room across the street. It was right up against a cliff. The room was so dark I had to strike a match to find the one mothpower light bulb to illuminate the joint. It made me so homesick I couldn't sleep in the room. I slept with my head on my arms at a desk in the writing room just off the lobby. The night porter promised to wake me up in time to catch the train home. I didn't have much money, but I had a lot of stuff to carry. So here I go down Central Ave. carrying a baritone sax and an alto case in one hand and my suitcase with clarinet in the other. I did manage to make the station, board the train and get home.

A while after the Hot Springs fiasco, I took a job in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, figuring it was too far away to leave, even if I got homesick. I played with this small group for a few weeks until I received a letter, my parents forwarded, containing a better offer from the Artie Collins orchestra. I grabbed the offer, joined them in Cincinnati, Ohio, and opened in a big casino type club across the river from Louisville. The ad I put in *Billboard Magazine* to which Collins responded said I played alto, clarinet, baritone sax, and sang. In his job-offering letter, Collins noted what I advertised, but added I had to be able to play "hot" on all three. This term meant an instrumentalist played jazz choruses with improvisation, instead of just reading notes.

Another favorite spot for bands in Fayetteville was the old Washington Hotel. The hotel took up the space now occupied by the former Woolworth building on the southwest corner of the square. When I played there, Sam Peck owned the hotel, lived there, and operated it. He later sold his interest in it, went down to Little Rock to set up his famous Sam Peck Hotel. At one time, KUOA had its studios in the Washington. We made a number of broadcasts from the little cubbyhole KUOA occupied. I hand-copied one heck of a lot of stock arrangements the music publishers sent to the radio stations for free. That was one way we could build up our music library without spending money.

Over at the University they would occasionally import bands like Alphonso Trent from Fort Smith. I remember Ted Fiorito came one time. I took some of our guys, after the dance, down to the old Majestic Restaurant located beside the tracks in "Schulertown". We had a nice visit with the men from that famous band. Another time, Herman Waldeman, who was very well known and highly thought of, came from Texas. We had all listened to him many times on remote broadcasts from hotels down Texas way.

I'd married Josephine Hogan Burdine in 1934 while playing at the Belvedere Club in Hot Springs. For the next few years I stayed around

Fayetteville, working for brief periods in Springfield, MO and Denver, CO. When that played out, some of the guys found a job in Kansas City and persuaded me to return home by way of K. C. I worked one of the gangster-run nightclubs of northern Kansas City. But, I moved on to better jobs. I was playing on 12th Street, near the Muehlbach Hotel when Benny Goodman's band came to town. One evening Harry James and a sax player from his band dropped by the club where I was playing, my wife and our drummer's mate sitting at a table by the bandstand. They said, "Pardon us, but you look like musicians' wives. Would it be all right to sit here until they get off?" Eventually I became quite good friends with Dave Matthews, James' sax player. In fact, he'd come down to our apartment after I finished work at four A. M., join us in a "night lunch" and talk.

In December of '38, we came home for a visit with my folks. Upon our return to Kansas City, there was a wire from Harry James offering me a job. I wired back indicating my interest though I had no idea how I'd get to where he was playing. We did manage to join his band by the middle of January, 1939. They were in the midst of rehearsing, really just getting started.

About the middle of the first year I went with Harry, he discovered a fellow, named Frank Sinatra, singing at a club in New Jersey and offered him a job. That's how Sinatra started singing for a band. He was very interested in photography, an enthusiasm that rubbed off on me. So when I left Harry James in December of 1939, I returned to Fayetteville in an attempt to learn photography.

Regarding other musicians who left this area for greener fields, the first that comes to my mind was Bill Paisley. His father was a minister in Fayetteville. I believe Bill played piano. Talk was that he went to New York and played with the NBC studio orchestra. He also did quite a bit of arranging for them later on.

Another good bandsman was a really fine trumpet player named Benny Strickler. I played alongside him in the mid-thirties. In fact, he was in the band with Harry Hurst and myself down at the Belvedere Club. Benny married Frances Hilton, of the Fayetteville Hiltons. I lost track of him for some time. Later I found out he played with Bob Wills when Wills had a country swing orchestra out in California in the early 40's. He also made a name for himself blowing jazz solos with Segar Ellis. According to the book *Giants of Jazz*, Benny became sick with tuberculosis, came back to Fayetteville, and died quite young in 1946 — a real loss!

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Newspaper advertising during 1930s for his orchestra.

Harry James and his Orchestra at Atlantic City, June 1937. L. to R.: Bill Luther, tenor sax; Thurman Teague, string bass; Jack Gardner, piano; Jack Shaffer, trumpet; Ralph Hawkins, drummer; Red Kent, guitar; Drew Page, alto sax; Connie Haines, singer; Frank Sinatra, singer; Dave Matthews, lead alto sax; Claude Bowen, lead trumpet; Truett Jones, trombone; Jack Palmer, trumpet; Claude Lakey, tenor sax; Russell Brown, trombone.

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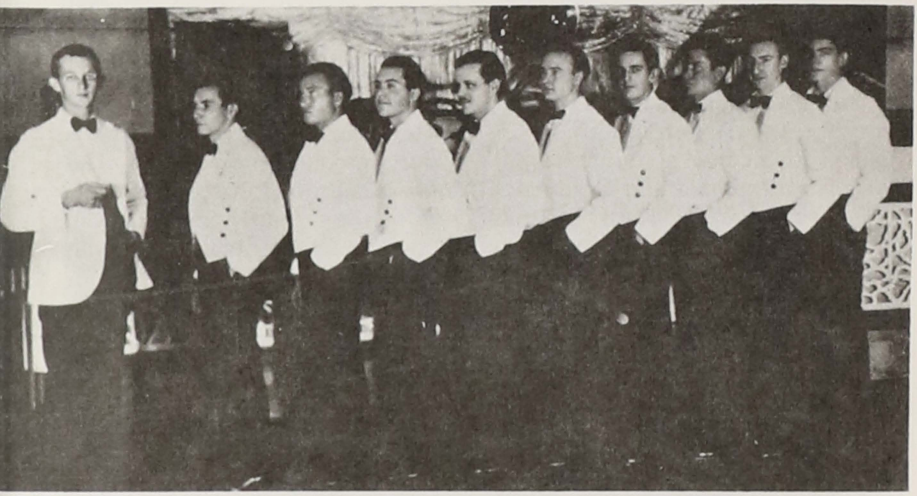
	3	DEC30-30	ROOM	—		* 1.50		* 38.33
	4	DEC31-30	ROOM	—		* 2.00		* 40.33
	5	JAN1[illegible]31	CASH	D			* 15.00	* 25.33
	6							
	7	JAN-1-31	ROOM	—		* 2.00		* 27.33
	8	JAN-2-31	LAUNDRY	B		* 1.85		* 29.18



L. to R.: Harry Hurst, orchestra leader; Harold Adkins, drummer; Jack Budd, alto sax; Blakely Head, piano; Bill Luther, lead alto; Bub Tukis, tenor sax; Larry Enos, bass violin; Ray Roberts, 2nd trombone; Clair Maris, trumpet; Benny Strickler, trumpet; Varsity Club Orchestra at Belvedere Club in Hot Springs, 1934.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WILLIAMS

By Marceline Campbell Meldrum

I wish I could have known my grandfather Williams. I can barely remember a slender, sick old man with white hair and beard, who lived in a cottage on what is now Woolsey Street, which was for a long time the only house in the area. There he died in 1912.

The history of his family is that of many people who braved the hardships of ocean travel to make their way through wilderness and rugged terrain and possible Indian attacks in order to have land and raise a family.

As Grandpa told his family, the first Williams of his line to come to America from Wales was Thomas, who came with a friend named McCoy, to whose sister Thomas was married. Records show James and John McCoy and Thomas WIlliams owning land in western Virginia before 1750. These settlers were on an Indian hunting ground, and some thought the British were afraid of losing the western territory. In 1763 the Indians made a raid in which they destroyed three families in the most brutal way. The British were suspected of instigating the horror.

Another story tells of Indians kidnapping the two Williams children. McCoy volunteered to try to rescue them and bartered with the captors until they agreed to release the children. Some say it was Thomas who was abducted and killed. Records are not clear.

By 1771-1772, in the records of a store, are the names of John McCoy, Jacob Williams and his brother John, John Williams, Sr. and his wife.

Official records are not available; they were lost when the British burned the capitol in the War of 1812.

The nearest county seat was a long way from the settlement. They had to go over the mountain for all legal matters, including taxes. This was a real hardship, and dangerous also. In 1777 the settlers drew up and presented a petition to become a county. John Williams was one of the signers. The petition was granted and Greenbrier County was formed, its borders set.

The next John Williams, grandfather of my grandfather, made a will, beautifully written, in which he left to his son John six hundred dollars, with exact amounts to his daughters, all seven of them, and to his granddaughters. He left to his wife six hundred dollars, a negro girl Jude, his bay mare, all farming utensils, one bed and furniture. He died in 1830. One must surmise that there had been a previous arrangement concerning the land.

In 1833, the town, laid out by Moses McCoy, was incorporated and named Williamsburg in honor of Thomas Williams, the first settler.

The next John Williams, my great-grandfather, had land and increased his holdings by numerous grants, some for his service in the War of 1812, during which he was given the rank of captain. At one time he was thought to be the largest landholder in the county, reputed to own 200,000 acres. Among his holdings in 1859 was the Blue Sulphur Spring and hotel.

In the first half of the 19th century it was customary for residents of the

South to move, bag and baggage, to that part of Virginia to escape the heat and malaria, leaving the men at home to carry on the work. They lived in the hotel and took the waters. The more the water smelled and tasted of sulphur, the better. The White Sulphur Spring Hotel was, and is, the best known. The Blue Sulphur, however, had a fine clientele. It was a two-story hotel with a long porch across the front, the kind with rocking chairs the length of the porch, and all the additional buildings necessary to care for horses, servants, and cooking. John Williams never allowed cooking in his house.

Late in the 1850s, when John owned it, it had lost out to White Sulphur, as had many other spas, so John sold it to the Baptists for a school, and became a member of the school board. The war came before he could collect, the school closed, and northern troops burned it to the ground. Only the gazebo over the spring survived and is still there. After the war, John's family tried very hard to be reimbursed. Although the government admitted its responsibility, it was let drag on until, when John died, Congress closed the matter. I am sure that his being a southerner was part of the problem.

John's wife was Jane Knight and they had one daughter and nine boys: John, George, Ken, Benjamin Franklin, Bolivar, James Harvey, Thomas, Albert and Allen. Several were named after famous men — Simon Bolivar, for example, was the liberator of South America; Albert Gallatin was a U.S. statesman and secretary of the treasury.

The only one any of us knew was Thomas who spent six years studying surgery in New York and went to California where he was associated with Stanford University and was chairman of the board when the stadium was built.

Great-grandfather John Williams was a very devout man and a careful father. Benjamin Franklin Williams used to tell of his life as a child on a farm. Although John gave them every advantage, work was a part of their life. For their education a live-in tutor was employed. John invited the neighbors to send their children to share the instruction — to what level I do not know.

John's brother Simon was a leader in the establishment of the Methodist church, donating the land on which it was built. He was superintendent of the Sunday School and held various offices until the end of his life. As Methodism originated in Wales, it was logical that the family became Methodists.

My great-grandmother was the product of a different life style. Mehettable Bunger (1835-1900) came from a family of German origin which has been traced through the Brumbach-Hotsinpillar book. The family came to America in 1713. Mehettable was educated and thoroughly trained in household arts, English and German, and in the Presbyterian church. Her father owned and operated a mill and had considerable land. The house beside the mill is still there, in good condition, and still owned by the family. The mill, however, is gone as is the weaving house, but I saw five looms and spinning wheels there in 1970 or 1971, stored in the large attic.

The Bunger family was a big one, as were most in those days. They attended the Old Stone Church (Presbyterian) in Lewisburg, about three miles

away. It was and is the oldest Protestant church in continuous use west of the Allegheny Mountains. When I visited, I found it in excellent condition, the interior all white with red cushions, a beautiful communion service set up for the next service, the gray stone exterior in good condition — yet it went through the battles of the Civil War.

The pastor at the time of this account was the Rev. McElhenny, a remarkable man who served for sixty years, not only in the Old Stone Church, but (with the help of my grandmother's uncle) the rural churches as well. He had a school and an academy, the only education available at that time.

There is no record that Benjamin Franklin Williams attended that academy, but he was well educated to the point that he had resolved to become a minister or a doctor, and he left a large library in both fields. He and his brothers were sent to the University of Virginia.

In the normal course of society in a sparsely settled area, it is not unusual for young people to meet, as did the miller's pretty daughter and the handsome son of the landowner. They were born the same year, 1835, and were married by the Rev. McElhenny on December 27, 1854. Benjamin had almost decided to become a doctor and had learned that Bloomington, Indiana was the best place to study. At about this time the founder of the Mayo Clinic was studying there. A medical course was one year, but Benjamin and his increasing family remained there until 1867, much of that time unproductive because of the Civil War. Life in Bloomington during the War was not easy. As southerners, they were loyal to the South, and the children found that they had to pay the price of their loyalty. They were the butt of much animosity, but managed to hold their own. To add to their sorrow, John Williams died on May 3, 1863.

When the war was over, in 1865, Benjamin made the trip to what had become West Virginia (separated from Virginia and made a state of the Union in 1863) to try to settle the estate. He wrote his wife on May 7, 1865:

Bloomington, Ind. May 7, 1865

Mrs. M. M. Williams
My dear wife,

I leave tomorrow for W. Va. and as the voyage of life is uncertain, we may never meet on earth. If so and I should fall, train my children for God and heaven and if you, in my absence, should fall, that duty shall be sacredly and faithfully performed by me. Remember me in your prayers. Your affectionate husband Bej. F. Williams

As stated above, no indemnities to the estate were ever allowed

After the war there was talk of a railroad to be built from Missouri into Arkansas to open up timber and other resources. It was supposed to go through Maguiretown, then a thriving village. Benjamin had been advised to seek a rural practice as being good for his health, which was not as strong as he wished. With this in mind, he and his friend John Meredith came by

coach to Maguiretown. They bought a farm and returned to Indiana to bring back Williams' family (Meredith was not married). My mother recalled passing through St. Louis in a covered wagon. (I hope it was covered — it was supposed to be!)

The log house they had planned to build was too slow of completion, and while waiting they were housed in Maguire's tobacco barn. Impatient and uncomfortable, Benjamin bought Owen Maguire's house and the land belonging to it. There they stayed. That house is all that remains today.

They were welcome because a doctor was needed; they were loved because they were good people. While Grandpa was attending his growing practice, Grandma was taking care of her family and helping anyone in trouble. Her dress was always clean with a white lace fichu around her neck. When night calls came, she saddled the horse while Grandpa dressed and checked his medical saddle bags. (I have that — or those — saddle bags with their medicine jars and instruments. I did throw the powders and pills away.) After Kenneth was big enough he took on that chore. (Kenneth was the son of Grandpa's son Edgar who had been sent back to Virginia to college. There he had married a beautiful girl of good family. She died when their baby was born.

Grandma had a garden, vegetables and flowers, sheep, chickens and geese. She carded, spun and wove the wool into cloth and quilts. For a long time the post office was a pigeon hole desk in her front hall. When anyone in the town needed help she was there. When wounded men came to the house in need of attention, she would cut up her sheets if bandages were needed.

As there apparently was no resident minister in the town, Grandma taught the small children, Meredith the youth group, and Grandpa the adults. He was also the preacher and performed marriages, as well as handling legal work for people who could not write.

A horse was the means of travel; everyone rode. Mama's sidesaddle hung in the shed on Dickson Street until Mary (Mrs. James Gregory) took over. Papa said she was a beautiful rider, with curly red hair and a nice figure.

Grandpa eventually felt the need to improve his skills and to have a degree to show it, so he went to the Medical College of St. Louis and received his Doctor of Medicine degree. The diploma is on vellum, now very wrinkled, all in Latin, dated March 10, 1876. His thesis was on erysipelas, a disease of the skin. He came back to Maguiretown more active than ever, profesionally and as a citizen. He had established the Masonic Lodge on the second floor of the Maguire store (he was a 32nd degree Mason), and was preaching, teaching and performing marriages.

When they had first arrived in Maguiretown, they had lost a son, little Bennie. Meredith was asked to find a burial place for the child and selected a plot in the Stokenbury Cemetery, well above flood line. There the other members in the family rested also.

In the eighteen-nineties Grandpa was elected to the state legislature where he served two terms. His quick and ready wit did not always guarantee him a win; in at least one race he came in last. Of course he was a

Democrat as in his mind "Republican" meant carpetbagger. I wonder how he felt when his daughter married father, a leader of the Republicans in the county. If mugwump meant patriotism and devotion to principle, he wanted to be counted as a mugwump.

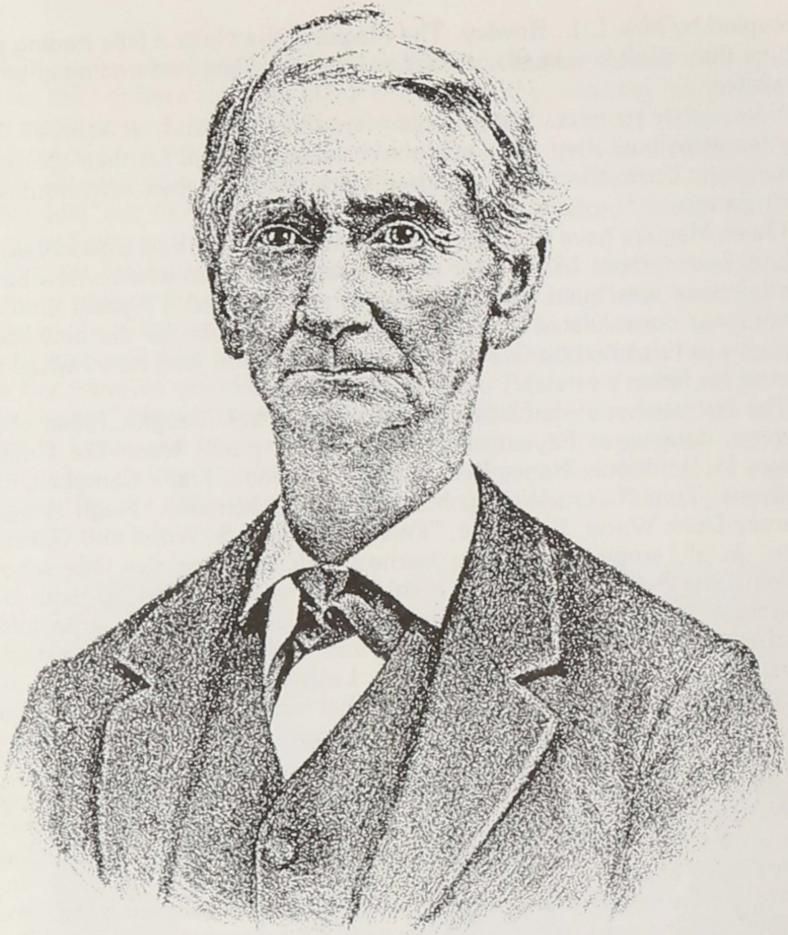
B.F. Campbell's politics may not have been acceptable, but the man himself was. So the marriage of Effie Williams and B.F. Campbell took place September 23, 1882.

One by one the Williams children were married and some moved far away: Uncle Johnny to Teague, Texas; Uncle Hosea to Walla Walla, Washington, where later contact was lost. One of the girls, Mehetable, called Het, married Pike Benbrook who went to the Klondike and was lost. John H. Williams in 1878 married Lavada C. Benbrook, daughter of Ewing Benbrook. Aunt Lell (Luella) married Jesse Williams, no relation, who owned the drug store at the corner of West and Dickson Streets. Once he let me sit in the upstairs window and watch the circus unload from the train across the street! He and Aunt Lell were very indulgent. No wee child left his store without a bit of candy. My parents were strict! But while the children were at home, there was gaiety in the house. There were parties and picnics, church activities which included both boys and girls, and there was dancing.

In 1885, Dr. Benjamin Franklin Williams wrote his wife as follows:

> To M.W., My best friend —
>
> Fifty years ago today you came upon life's arena to meet the joys and sorrows which are the lot of common humanity. You bravely met much that was calculated to wring tears of grief and make you feel that earth is a darksome home at best. While this is true, have you not also had a few pleasant hours upon which you can look back with joy and satisfaction?
>
> For thirty-three of these years you have been walking by my side, through the storm and sunshine of life. I have to regret that I have contributed so little to secure to you that happiness which your devotion to my interests amply merits.
>
> Please find enclosed a small token of my remembrance of your natal day.
>
> After expressing the sincere desire that you may live to see it recommence many times, I am
>
> Yours truly, B. F. W.

Grandma and Grandpa were never well off. If the children did not need the money, someone else always did. Grandma died in 1901 and their daughter, Racel Anna, died the same year. Grandpa grieved for his wife the rest of his life, even though he remarried. His second wife was the widow of one of his friends in Maguire Town, a man named Towler. He said, "One is only married once. Anything else is an arrangement. I needed someone to take care of my house. She needed someone to look after her." Sometime later they moved into Fayetteville. *(The story which follows is related.)*



H. M. Maguire WASHINGTON COUNTY.

MAGUIRE TOWN

by Juel Benbrook Hamblen Giles

A look back in time takes us to the 1820s when Owen Maguire (or McGuire), his wife Mary and their sons Hosey and Green came trekking over from Kentucky to homestead in the West. They settled on a large tract of land on the east side of the Middle Fork of the White River, including the river bed, located eight miles southeast of Fayetteville on McGuire Road and Highway 174.

Owen and Mary were frugal, hard working pioneers who, with the help of their young teenage sons, by 1826 had a good log house built. After more than 160 years, this house is still standing, in good condition, owned and

occupied by Mrs. L.L. Rowley. The Maguires then built a little trading post where they dealt in tobacco, as well as buying, selling and trading anything available.

Soon other pioneers began settling around them and, as soon as their homes were built they were anxious to build a school for their children's education. Up to then, their children were taught in their own homes by their parents.

Owen Maguire gave the land and all of them together built a good little log school house about 1832. It served 34 years until 1866 when a new board schoolhouse was built. The new board house served 47 years until the school was consolidated with Elkins in 1913. The site for the new board school was furnished by Green Maguire (Owen's son who now owned this part of his father's estate).

The first teacher in that little log school was a Prof. Vaughn, father of Dr. George Vaughn of Fayetteville. Some of the pupils were: Ike Combs, Hosey M. Benbrook, Nancy Benbrook, David Hood, Frank Campbell, Effie Williams, Tom Nolen, William Meredith, Millie Meredith, Hugh Reagan, Harvey Doak Wood, Bell Agee, "Parson" Andrew S. Wood and Gertrude Irvin. In all, some 75 children learned their ABCs in this little school. Around the busy trading post, a little town was springing up, with new leaders moving in — men who were instrumental in getting a postoffice established. B.F. Williams, a doctor and a Cumberland Presbyeterian preacher, was the first postmaster. Later his wife, Mahetable was postmistress, the first woman to serve in that capacity in Washington County. The name of the settlement was changed from Maguire's Store to Maguire Town.

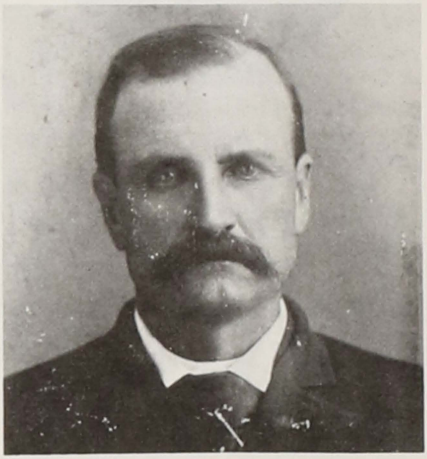
Others serving as postmasters were George Washington Maguire and Green Maguire. After the death of the Hon. Hosea Maguire, Mrs. Williams moved the post office to her home, where it remained until consolidated with Elkins, after which it was only a postal exchange.

Among the new businesses in the fast-growing little town was a blacksmith shop across the road from the trading post. This was owned by Jim Oliver, father of Joe Oliver who had a business in Elkins. The Tom Towlers ran a ferry service across the White River to Fayetteville, (which was later operated by Rob King's boys.)

By now, Hosey Maguire was getting pretty well fixed. He was engaged to marry Miss Louise Trammel from Missouri, and built her a fine "Big House" still standing (1985) and still called the "Big House". Some say slave chains and rings were found in the basement of the two-story house after Hosey was dead. My grandfather said, "Hosey bought, sold, and traded everything under the sun; no doubt he trafficked in slavery some, too." At any rate, he did have slaves for his personal use and to walk the floor with their sick and crying babies. He and Louise had nine children, six of them dying in infancy. Three daughters lived to womanhood, one of whom was the late Addie Felker of Fayetteville for whom I was named (Juel Addie Benbrook). Addie is buried in Evergreen Cemetery. In spite of hardships and death, a lively social life was carried on in some of the well-to-do homes, especially Hosea's "Big House".

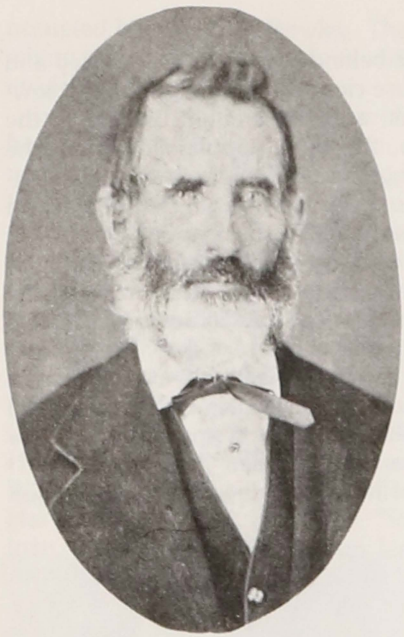
With slaves who lived in little houses behind the big house, Hosey and Louise did not have to worry about house cleaning, washing, ironing, sewing, mending and caring for the babies, and could attend dances to the tunes of George Shumate of Durham, the most popular fiddlers in the whole country. Mrs. Margaret Jett Waggoner & Mrs. Hugh Jett of Fayetteville told me her grandmother (who lived at Oxford Bend) went to Maguire Town to trade and attend socials.

With his big house completed and his family well started, Hosey was ready to replace the old trading post with a three-story brick building, the bricks made at the site of the building. There was a 100-foot long shed for stock, grain and fruit (mostly apples). It was built west of the "Big House", and my historian grandfather Hosey Maguire Benbrook once owned the "Big House." He used the shed for his mules and apples until ready to sell them in Texas and Louisiana. As I write this, an item appeared in "How Times Flies" in the *Northwest Arkansas Times* under "100 Years Ago": "Hosey Maguire shipped six carloads of hogs Tuesday. This is the largest shipment made by one man this season."



Cathryn Irwin and Hosea Maguire Benbrook

The top, or third, story of the new brick building was to be used for public purposes. Businessmen in a 50-mile radius came there to transact business. It was also the home of the Sylva Masonic Temple, No. 382 F.A.N., which was chartered January 7, 1873. Those at the official founding were: Sam W. Williams, Albert Pike, Hosey M. Maguire, Robert McCamey, Archibald Yell, and Elias Boudinot, an Indian lawyer of note. Some of the charter members were: George Washington Maguire, Hosey Maguire, Ewing Benbrook, Bennett Shumate, John Quincy Benbrook, Hosey Maguire Benbrook, and John Shale. William Shumate and Ewing Benbrook were in a third influx of Maguire Town emigrants — Shumate from Wesley, Benbrook from what is now Johnson north of Fayetteville (via Strain where he married Mahalia Fincher and had two of his twelve children) and a half dozen



dependent relatives.

The middle or "ground" floor of the brick building was about three feet above ground level to make room for a storage basement beneath. This second floor was the general store where everything was bought, sold and traded: farm reapers, sewing machines, cook stoves, chickens, opossum hides, even a family milk cow! Hosea tried to be the first to put everything new on the market. So when Charity Van Hoose Shumate of Durham, a widow with six children, heard about the sewing machine for sale at Maguire's store, she decided to trade one of her milk cows for one. She chose "Old Pink" because she had a nice udder with teats full of milk and would bring a good price. She had other cows and plenty of milk without "Pink's" milk, she reasoned, and the trade was made. Women came on horseback, on foot, or in buggies to see the contraption that could sew without using fingers!

This sounds as though all was well, but it wasn't. "Old Pink" was a pet and the children were used to milking her directly into their mouths. When they came home from school and learned what had happened, they threw themselves on the ground and cried, sobbing themselves to sleep that night. My mother was one of those six children. Today, nothing except memories of "Old Pink" remain, except that Mother kept the little bobbin drawer of the machine as a reminder of the "trade the children didn't sanction." (I have the bobbin drawer now.)

The pioneer Towlers started a "Towler Cemetery" of which only one marker, (that of a Confederate soldier) still remains.

The Fisher Stage Coach also served the community.

My parents, Herbie and Elizabeth (Shumate) Benbrook lived at Maguire Town in 1899 with my grandparents in the "Big House" the year I was born. My mother would sometimes ride to Fayetteville on the stage coach on business or to visit relatives.

I have no picture of the first little log school, but I do have pictures of the board schoolhouse in a newspaper clipping, and of the brick store, and a picture of the Hon. Hosea Maguire when he was representative for Arkansas.

The other picture is of a school teacher, pupils and parents, given to me recently by Mrs. Edward Bodine of McGuire Road and Highway 74. Almost all the pupils are identified by Mrs. Mildred Vail Carmichael of Fayetteville and Ernest Bodine of Maguire Town. Both are in the picture, although Mildred was not old enough to attend school. The picture is of a "Parents' Day" held about 1911 at the school house, and several parents are in the picture. The teacher was Elizabeth Clark Hayes, mother of Lina Hayes Watson, widow of Edd Watson, a noted undertaker in Fayetteville. Lina is still living in Fayetteville. The pupils and parents (not in order) are: Anna Bodine, Edward Bodine, Ernest Bodine, Bell Dailey, Claud Dailey, Grace Dailey, George Duncan, Mark Duncan, Rulleigh Duncan, Cora Fleener, a Fleener boy, Dave Lewis, Mrs. Lewis, Mrs. Nan Lewis, Clarence Perry, Clifford Perry, Edna Perry, Otis Perry, Frank Perry, maybe a Fred Perry, Grace Perry, Mrs. Perry holding baby girl, Edith Trammel, John Vail and wife Arimenta, Agnes Vail, Mildred Vail, Frank and John Vail (cousins of Vail girls), Edgar Williams and Mrs. Wright.

Additional pupils in a second picture, owned by Mrs. Carmichael, (made in CA 1912) were: Prof. DeRoulac (teacher), Diva King, Floy Oliver, Fred Clifford, Trent Roberts, Lynn Robins, Jim Wood, Neeley Wood, and Garley King. In this picture, a half dozen of the pupils' faces are scratched out. Mildred Carmichael said she "scratched the faces of everyone she was mad at." She said she was not old enough to go to school, but "she sure knew how to scratch!" One of the pupils she was mad at was her sister! Mildred is the cute little girl in the front row with the little white dress. She is standing close to Edgar Williams whom she thought was "real cute."

Prof. DeRoulac, mentioned as the teacher in the second picture, may have been the last school teacher at old Maguire Town School District 111. This picture was made about 1912 and the school consolidated with Elkins in 1913 according to the County Supervisor's office.

Everyone was not for consolidation, and in many of the little schools bitter and lasting enemies were often made.

From the County Supervisor's Office record is this statement:

> Come now John W. Meredith and eleven others, residents and citizens of Washington County, and patrons of school district 111, and object to having this said School District dissolved.
>
> The court having considered the subject is of the opinion that the dissolution of the said district will be to the best in-

terests of all concerned.

It is therefore by the court ordered that this petition be and it thereby is refused.

Some of the other teachers who taught at Maguire Town were: Hugh Reagan, taught all over the county and married schoolmate Bell Agee; Billy Williams, later a county judge; Alf Williams, taught his wife, daughter of Hosea Maguire; Hade Smith, father of Mrs. C.E. Tatum; John W. Meredith, community leader and farmer (David Hood was the last living student of Meredith); Cener Robins, daughter of John Meredith; Tom Cherry although I know nothing about him, was prominent; B.F. Campbell, married his student Effie Williams and they had seven children, the youngest of whom (Mrs. William Meldrum) is still living in Fayetteville. He rode horseback from Strain as there was no school there.

Other teachers were: Margret Irvin, daughter of John and Susan (Windsor) Irvin of Maguire Town, who taught school around the country and married Edgar Williams, son of Dr. B.F. Williams, and whose grandson's widow (Mrs. Edgar Williams, Jr.) still lives in Fayetteville; the Vail girls also taught at Maguire Town, although they lived in the "Big House" for many years, moving there about 1909; Otis Thompson, who was my first teacher in 1905, and I believe he was from West Fork as an old picture of the West Fork school shows an Otis Thompson in the front row of little folks; Jimmy Rutledge, of whom nothing is known; Ada Duncan, who probably taught between Lizzie Hayes and Prof. DeRoulac.

Garley King, now in his 80's, was the son of Rob King who owned the schoolhouse land when the school and church folded up. Garley, who now lives in Durham remembers that Ada Duncan slapped him as hard as she could on the cheek. He says he doesn't know why she did it, that his mother said he was always a good boy. However, I gather he wasn't teacher's pet, as he said Prof. DeRoulac once told him and another boy to stay in after school. When the other scholars were gone, Prof. DeRoulac told the boys to "lay flat on their backs on the floor" and admonished them to "stay there". Then he went to his desk and started looking at papers. Other schoolboys pried the back window up cautiously and whispered to Garley and the other boy to "get up and get out of there." They did just that, and the next day were scared to go to school, but the incident was never mentioned. (Garley plans to drive a wagon in the Sesquicentennial celebration in 1986.)

"As the school goes, so goes the town," oldtimers predicted when fighting consolidation. When the early pioneer dynamic leaders who built the school and the little town passed on, they apparently left no descendants with their leadership genius to continue expansion. Even if they had, perhaps they could not have stayed the ravages of time. It was the train which really finished the little town. Instead of building a bridge over White River to Maguire Town and Huntsville, two thriving little towns at that time, the Iron Horse went down the river on the west side, past Durham, Thompson, Crosses, and St. Paul. There was no Elkins then, but when a post office was needed on the railroad track to replace Maguire Town, Boon's Grove and Hood, it was called "Elkins" and to this day no one knows where they got

that name.

With all these misfortunes, the glitter and sparkle of proud little Maguire Town began to fade. Gradually its illustrious school children, now grown, began to drift to Fayetteville and some to faraway places. Only recently the last vestiges of the little school disappeared when the steps were removed. Garley King, son of Rob King who owned the land at the time the house was demolished, said he did not know what became of the steps. They were there long after his father had salvaged the old schoolhouse and church building.

One more cruel blow struck the little town a few years ago when the brick trading post was struck by lightning and its interior reduced to rubble. Attesting to how well the Maguires did their work, its shell is still standing, "a ragged vagabond, weaving in the noonday sun", all her lovely companions now faded and gone.

Two of their buildings are still standing intact after more than 160 years: the first, Owen Maguire's log home of 1826; the second, Hosey Maguire's "Big House" from the 1850s.

Now that it is time to say goodbye to Washington County's most illustrious ghost town, I feel as Prof. "John Meredith and eleven others" must have felt in 1913 when they pleaded with the courts not to dissolve their little school. But time and tide wait for no man. Perhaps it was just time for the little school and town to go.

I should say something of the Shumate and Benbrook families since they came a little later than the first settlers, having settled first someplace else before coming to Maguire Town. (Both Shumate and Benbrook were my great-grandparents.)

William Shumate came from near Wesley, and Ewing Benbrook came from what is now Johnson, via Strain, where he married Mahalia Fincher. He brought with him also his younger brother, John Quincy Benbrook, aged 14 years. Both Shumate and Benbrook owned the same land, with Bill Shumate owning it first. It was a mile or so south of Maguire Town, over the mountain, and adjoined Major Thomas J. Hunt's land on the White River. During the war Hunt was a Federal officer and Benbrook was a Southern sympathizer. Nevertheless they remained fast friends. More than once Hunt protected Ewing from being killed by the Federal troops.

Shumate had slaves and with their help built cellars around the slope of the hill on which they lived, where they stored huge supplies of food for the family and slaves, some to sell to the public. William's son Bennett (charter member of the Sylva Lodge) married Charity Van Hoose (of the sewing machine episode) who could spell every word in the Blue Back Speller by heart as they came, without anyone "giving them out" to her. When Charity and Bennett had their first baby, William gave them a slave girl to help with the babies.

An ex-Arkansas attorney, Guy Williams, and the late attorney, Oscar E. Williams of Fayetteville, were descendants of William and Sarah Ball Shumate of Maguire Town. Oscar's mother was Nancy Jane Shumate. His wife was an Eagle, sister of the late well known J.D. Eagle of Fayetteville.

Oscar and his wife had two sons, Earl and Eugene, now in the insurance business in Fayetteville.

William and Sarah Shumate lost two Confederate sons in the war, and two great grandsons in later wars. Major Clyde Benbrook was killed in WW II, and Lenley Shumate in WW I. Lenley was the son of Henry and Nora Bell Shumate McQuistion. He was also the grandson of the late Rev. John McQuistion of Sulphur City and Prairie Grove. When Lenley was about two years old, Nora died and Lenley's grandmother, Charity Shumate, added him and his newly-born baby brother Bennett to her own brood of six orphan children. Lenley attended school, went to war, died and is buried with a government marker in the Shumate Cemetery in Durham under the name "Lenley Shumate". His name was on the big mural in the county courthouse as "Lenley Shumate" until someone changed it to McQuistion. (I had artist Neppie Conner place an asterisk by his name and write "Lenley Shumate" at the bottom of the list with the consent of Judge Charles Johnson and the D.A.R. who put the mural there in 1918.) Because his grandmother Charity raised him, Lenley never thought of himself as other than a Shumate.

When William Shumate left Madison County, he left his father Bayless Shumate on the farm (which Bayless had purchased from William). Bayless had a daughter Mildred who married John Kennan, County Supervisor of Schools in Fayetteville for many years. The Shumate family was written up in a FLASHBACK booklet in February of 1961 and a big genealogical reunion has been held annually since the 1700s, when the first De La Schumates came from France to America via Amsterdam, Holland, where they married into the Van Hoose family.

Just before the Civil War, William Shumate decided to buy a farm at Durham and sold the place near Maguire Town to Ewing Benbrook, who was a Confederate sympathizer and sold bacon, molasses, and produce from the Shumate caves to Confederate soldiers. Over the years I have seen the caves (or cellars) go one by one — filled with junk then covered over with dirt. The last time I looked, only one was still visible.

Ewing and Mahalia Benbrook had eleven children of their own and about six other kin who lived with them, all of whom attended Maguire Town school. Ewing had a good common school education when he came to Washington County from Illinois and he took some weekly newspapers which he read to the neighbors, sitting in his cane bottom chair in the corner of the fireplace in the yard.

Ewing helped his nephew, Harvey Doak Wood (Dr. Wood's mother was Katie Fincher, sister of Ewing's wife Mahalia Fincher) through medical college. Dr. Wood vowed he would never charge a Benbrook a doctor bill, and he never did. He was married to Annette Dickerson, a descendant of the Van Hooses at Hazel Valley. His picture hangs in the entrance to the City Hospital, and his home is still intact on Washington Avenue in Fayetteville, with the name "Wood" still etched in the glass of the front door. He was one of the "finders keepers" who found a coin when the land was excavated for the McIlroy Bank about 1900. Between $5,000 and $10,000 in coins were

found, and one man found $2,000 in coins. No one ever knew how the money got there, but Jim McIlroy let everyone keep whatever they found. H.D. and Annette Wood were parents of three accomplished sons: Ben, Walter and Albert.

One of Ewing's sons was Dr. T. Benbrook who spent his life as a doctor in Rockwell, Texas. Another son, Robert Benbrook, was a well-to-do cotton broker in Rockwall.

Only two of Ewing's four daughters stayed here, although Lavada who married Johnnie Williams (son of Dr. B.F. Williams), and Clementine who married George Releford, stayed here a few years before making their permanent home in Texas. Nancy, Ewing's oldest daughter, married Henry Wood (half-brother of Dr. Harvey Doak Wood) and their daughter Nora married George Strain from the family for whom Strain school, church and graveyard is named. The late Lucille Strain Mitchel was married to the late Owen Mitchel, music teacher and band director at the U. of A. Ellen married Tue Boone. They went to the Gold Rush in 1900, returned with pockets full of money and built the big house on the south side of Elkins on Highway 16. Incidentally, Pike Benbrook (Ewing's youngest son) who had just married Mahetable Williams, daughter of Dr. B.F. Williams, accompanied them to Alaska and was drowned in the Yukon River going from Fairbanks to his land claim.

Two of Ewing's sons, Jack and Smith, left Maguire Town when very young and operated a casino in Portland, Oregon.

Ewing's young brother John Quincy married Alice Conner of the Walnut Grove-Farmington area and operated a dry goods store in Fayetteville. He was on the board when the University of Arkansas was built, and his son William Lincoln owned a drugstore on the east side of the square where the old Fayetteville Drug Store stood.

My historian grandfather, Hosea Maguire Benbrook, named for his cousin, the Hon. Hosea Maguire of Maguire Town, was the oldest of the eleven Ewing children and the only one to spend all of his 98 years in Maguire Town and Fayetteville. When he and grandmother Catherine Irvin (sister to school teacher Margret Irvin) could no longer care for themselves, they lived with my parents on East Mountain (now Mt. Sequoyah) where father filtered the city water for 33 years.

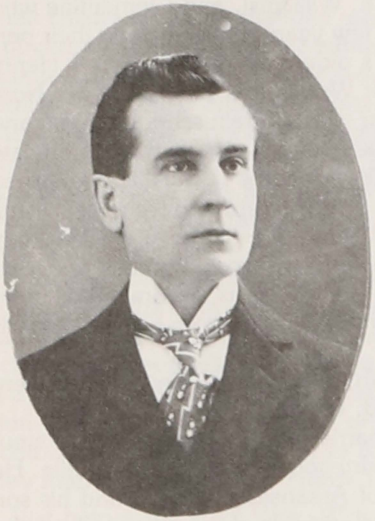
When grandfather was 96, my first husband (Albert A. Hamblen, Sr.) accompanied him to Gettysburg to the last Old Soldiers Reunion of the Blue and the Grey. He was dressed in a Confederate uniform, and all the old veterans were kept in wheelchairs for the three day celebration so that none would get hurt. He was the last Confederate soldier to die in Fayetteville (in 1942, just two years before his grandson, Major Clyde Benbrook, was killed in World War II).

Grandfather loved to talk about happenings at old Maguire Town and all over the country. A neighbor boy (when they lived at Harris) Walter Smith, wrote his college thesis on "The Life and Tales of Hosey M. Benbrook". Although grandfather was blind, my father took him every week to visit Allen Wilson, Fayetteville postmaster. I have their picture sitting on the front

steps of the post office.

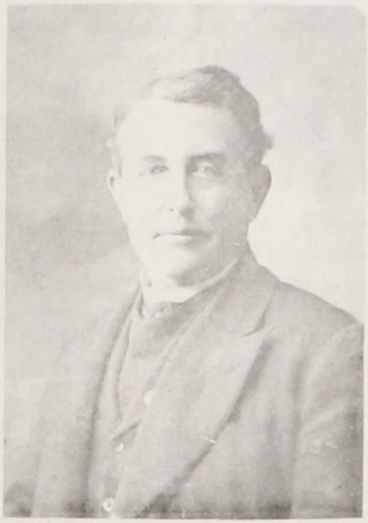
No doubt Allen Wilson would have been a rich source of Washington county history, but by the time I got around to asking to see his papers, his sister said they had all been burned.

My children and I are the last descendants of Ewing Benbrook in Washington County. My two great-grandsons, Kevin Lewis and Gary Jack Hamblen, are eight generations from Maguire Town and also eight generations from John Irvin of Maguire Town.



Jack Benbrook

Pike Benbrook



Dr. T. Benbrook

SHILOH MUSEUM SALUTES

by Bob Besom

J.H. Field and Burch Grabill were two of Northwest Arkansas' most famous photographers. For the first 35 years of this century, one or the other was busy recording the history of the region on film. The Shiloh Museum has used a year-long Arkansas sesquicentennial photography contest and a special exhibit to call attention to their contributions.

Compared with other photographers of Northwest Arkansas, there is a great deal of information available about Field and Grabill. Each was careful to sign his pictures and those pictures have been saved by individuals and institutions in significant numbers. Also, their families have saved important documents concerning their lives and work.

It is fitting that the two men be recognized together. Field and Grabill were almost exact contemporaries: both were born in the late 1860s and both died in 1936. Both grew up and learned photography in the North. Both were careful to keep up with the technology during a period of rapid change in photography processes. Both settled in Fayetteville (Grabill in 1901 and Field in 1913). Each served as "official photographer" for the University of Arkansas. Both got vital support in their businesses from their families.

And something that is particularly appreciated now, they both got out of their studios to record the world around them. Field is remembered as an artist, and the world he was most interested in was the natural one. Grabill concentrated on the man-made world, and his pictures document like no others what life in Northwest Arkansas was like in the early part of this century.

The artistic and documentary divisions of the year-long Shiloh Museum Sesquicentennial Photograph Contest are named for the two men.

Burch Enos Grabill was born in 1868 in Ohio. He attended Wilmington College in Wilmington, Ohio, in the early 1890s and opened a photo studio in Pennville, Indiana, in the mid-1890s. In September, 1899 Grabill enlisted for two years in the U.S. Army during the build-up for the Spanish-American War.

Grabill was sent to the Philippine Islands and kept a diary of his activities there. The diary was provided for research and the exhibit by his son, William B. Grabill of Shreveport, Louisiana.

The diary is a fascinating account of his experience as a soldier and photographer. It is clear from the diary that Grabill had a real curiosity about the world around him, was energetic in his drive to record that world on film, and was a good businessman.

Grabill studied Spanish and took side trips to explore the Philippines. He was willing to work hard for the right picture. An entry in April, 1901 explains how he climbed a tree to take a picture of his camp. "Stood on the top most limb like a bird," he wrote.

His diary explains how he experimented with stereoscopic views that were popular at the time as well as different types of printing paper. And he

Grabill at retouching stand (for portrait negatives), listening to KDKA, Pittsburgh, on his 12 dial RCA radio. He was using earphones here, but other times used speaker on right. (Shiloh Museum's W.B. Grabill Collection.)

took orders from fellow soldiers for pictures. When he was mustered out of the service, he had over $2,500.00 worth of orders to fill.

As late as 1902 Grabill was still filling orders for Philippines pictures. Grabill was probably well-established on the Fayetteville Square by then. Grabill lived in Fayetteville for 15 years and took an enormous quantity of pictures of acitivities in and around the community. Picture postcards became the rage during those years, and no northwest Arkansas photographer produced more postcards than Grabill.

Grabill married Maud Davis of Fayetteville in 1903 and both of their children, Fletcher and William, were born in Fayetteville.

Burch Grabill left Fayetteville during World War I to photograph troops training at Camp Beauregard in Louisiana. He settled in Shreveport after the war, but the family spent the summers in northwest Arkansas where it still owned property. Grabill is now appreciated in Louisiana for his documentation of life in northern Louisiana in the 1920s and early 1930s.

Julius Herman Field was born in Waupun, Wisconsin, in 1869. After he completed his public schooling, he took up his father's occupation of carpentry. But, as his wife later wrote: "It was dire necessity that he give up carpentry for photography. Always slight of build and frail of health, he found after a few years that carpentry in all kinds of weather in the rigorous Wisconsin climate was too much for his strength."

In 1894, Field borrowed $600.00, the asking price for a studio in Berlin, Wisconsin. He bought the business and hired a young woman, Minnie Bell

J.H. Field spent a lot of time out-of-doors in search of subjects. As shown, he sometimes carried his equipment by bicycle. (Shiloh Museum's B.E. Field Collection.) Please refer to February 1985 FLASHBACK for more information about Field and his art.

Dies, to work for him. J.H. later married Miss Dies. Their only son, Burton, was born while they were in Berlin. Mrs. Field described her husband's development period: "By trying to do the best that was in him always, his work began to attract attention. It was about this time that his hearing began to fail and gradually grew worse. This left him much to himself, and always a lover of the out of doors, he spent his time out of business hours in the open."

The Fields were attracted to Northwest Arkansas by the writings of another migrant to the area, the writer William R. Lighton. Lighton's article, "The Story of an Arkansas Farm," which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in January of 1910, intrigued the Fields and contributed to their deci-

sion to relocate to Fayetteville in 1913. There they established a studio on the town square.

Field was already known among America's art photographers when he moved to Northwest Arkansas. But it was here that he became famous. During his long career he won over 300 prizes in state, national, and even international competitions. He was featured several times in national magazines of the 1920s. His hard work, innovative spirit, patience, and his ability to find beauty in ordinary things were most often mentioned. The artist made his reputation with a "soft lens" approach to his subjects at a time when most photo-artists were seeking sharp clarity in their prints. Field was so effective with the "soft lens" that the editor of *American Photography* magazine in December 1920, could think of no one who was "more a master of its possibilities."

Mrs. Field was a very important factor in the artist's success. She was his bookkeeper, lab technician, retoucher, and, as their son, Dr. Burton Field of Dillwyn, Virginia, remembers, the "official greeter," because J.H. could not hear well.

The Field family income, while comfortable, was not large. Burton said in an interview that portraits were their "bread and butter" items. In 1933, the Fields semi-retired and bought a large two-story house at 735 West Dickson. The house was across from the University of Arkansas, and the couple supplemented their income by taking in student-boarders. Field died on January 14, 1936 after a series of heart attacks. His body was returned to Waupun, Wisconsin, for burial.

WHO WAS KATE SMITH?

Visiting at the Battlefield Park at Prairie Grove one afternoon the custodian showed me a copy of sheet of piano music written by F.F. Zellner in 1859. It was dedicated to Kate Smith.

There is a street running from Highway 62 West in Prairie Grove next to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which runs to the north edge of town. It is named Kate Smith Street. Everyone I asked told me Kate Smith was a popular singer on the radio and television but of course that street was named before 1908, as shown by the plat book of Prairie Grove of that date. It could not have been the famous singer.

I took the sheet of music to my church pianist Quince Dowell and she played it for me. It was beautiful. It is called the Fayetteville Polka. Mr. Zellner was a citizen of Prussia, who came to the United States and in 1859 renounced his citizenship and allegiance to the King of Prussia, and became a United States citizen. He was employed at the Sophia Sawyer school on West Mountain Street as a music teacher.

Checking the records of 1860 and thereabouts I could not find a Kate Smith in Fayetteville. There was a daughter of Presley R. Smith named Catherine. Could she have been the Kate or Katy Smith to whom the song or music was dedicated?

Flashback and I would like to know. *Lloyd McConnell*

RUTH RILEY, RN

by Linda O'Dell, RN, MSN

The beginnings of professional nursing in Northwest Arkansas can be traced to one person, Ruth Riley. It was through her example, organization, and energy that people in Northwest Arkansas received nursing care. This was accomplished through her direct care of patients; as superintendent of nurses at Fayetteville City Hospital Training School for Nurses; as superintendent of the Fayetteville City Hospital Training School for Nurses; and as a leader in the Arkansas State Nurses' Association at both the local and state levels.

Fayetteville City Hospital opened July 1,1912, as a twenty-seven bed facility. A local physician, William B. Welch, M.D., was the primary influence in the development of Fayetteville City Hospital. After his experiences during the Civil War as surgeon of the Thirty-fourth Arkansas Infantry Regiment (CSA), he had returned to Fayetteville to practice medicine, and he later spent much time, money, and energy to see to the formation of a hospital that would serve the area of Northwest Arkansas. Stephen and Amanda Stone donated the land in 1906 to the city of Fayetteville so that a hospital could be built. The building was completed in 1911. Fayetteville City Hospital was dedicated in May 1912.

Ruth Riley arrived in Fayetteville on June 30, 1912, to become the first superintendent of nurses at Fayetteville City Hospital. Little is known of Riley's background before her arrival in Fayetteville. She was born March 331, 1886, in Salina, Kansas, and graduated fron Washington University Nursing School in St. Louis, Missouri. After graduation, Riley served as a superintendent of nurses at Children's Hospital in St. Louis before coming to Fayetteville. Riley began as superintendent of nurses at Fayetteville City Hospital on July 1, 1912 when she was twenty-six years old. The hospital was the only one between Ft. Smith and ¢Joplin, Missouri, and served people from Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Prior to the establishment of Fayetteville City Hospital, nursing care was provided by women in the various communities of Northwest Arkansas. Some of these early nurses were Clara Wise, Sue Crossier, Nell Key, and Sadie Wilson. The educational background of these people is not known, although their contribution to caring for the sick in Northwest Arkansas was recognized by the citizens of the area.

Riley served as superintendent of nurses at Fayetteville City Hospital from July 1912 to October 1959. It was necessary for her to resign her position because of poor health. During her time at Fayetteville City Hospital she saw many changes and was instrumental in developing the opportunity of professional nursing in Northwest Arkansas. She started the Fayetteville City Hospital Training School for Nurses in July 1912. It operated from 1912 until 1934, when it was discontinued because of the Depression. During the time the school was in operation approximately 100 nurses were graduated.[8]As the superintendent of the nursing school as well as of the

nurses at the hospital, she had numerous responsibilities. These included teaching the students, overseeing the patient care provided by the students, reviewing applications for admission and accepting women for admission to the school of nursing, and working with the physicians and other staff at the hospital to provide quality nursing care to the ill people. She was involved in fund raising for the hospital and projects such as the nurses home that was completed in 1915 where the students and graduate nurses resided.

An example of the letter Miss Riley sent to the people who were listed as references on the student's application is:

City Hospital Training School
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Dear_____:

Miss_____has applied for admission to this school of nursing, and has given your name as a reference. The work of nursing demands young women of absolute trustworthiness and of more than average intelligence and education. It is also essential that pupils be of good character and in sound health of body and mind. Kindly answer the questions on the third page, and also furnish such information concerning her abilities as you may have at your command.

Yours truly,
Ruth Riley
Superintendent

Questions asked of the reference were:

1. How long have you known the applicant?
2. What has been your opportunity for personal acquaintance?
3. What can you say of her moral character?
4. Has she good habits and diposition?
5. Has she a good fundamental education, and does she show evidence of good intelligence?
6. Has she any characteristics which would appear to disqualify her for this work?
7. General remarks.

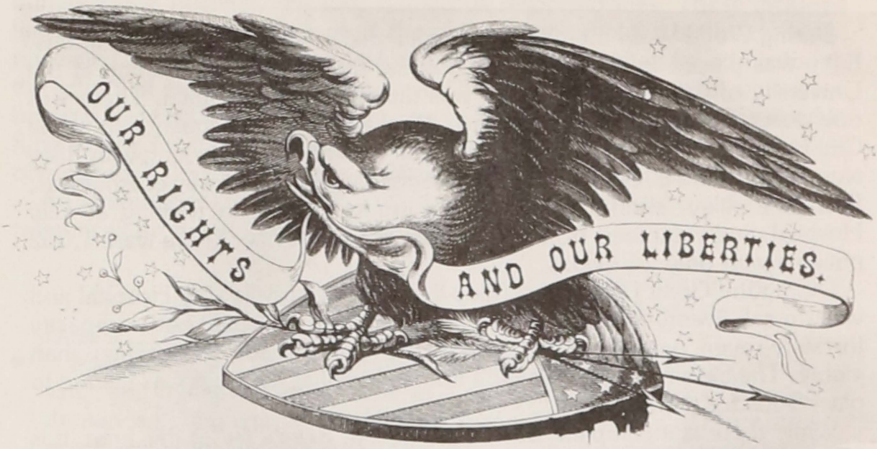
In 1923 a popular hair style for women was called the "bob." As superintendent for nurses as well as being responsible for the studnet nurses, Riley "ignored" the situation, "although by many people it was considered a terrible thing to do."

Initially the hospital had minimal equipment. The operating room had a sterilizer that had to be operated by a plumber's blow torch. It was not until 1915 that an electric device was purchased for the sterilizer. The kitchen had a wood stove that was sued for cooking food for all the patients and for heating all water for patient baths. In 1915, laboratory equipment was donated by Dr. Edward Forest Ellis. Riley spent that summer at the Bass Laboratory in New Orleans learning how to do blood counts and to check the blood for malaria, tuberculosis, and diptheria. Later she spent another summer in Chicago learning blood chemistry examinations. Patients had to be carried up and down stairs because there was no elevator until 1926.

During World War I there was a flu epidemic of international proportions. Riley was placed in charge of the hospital for the men in training at the University of Arkansas. Gray Hall was utilized for the hospital. There was one water faucet for the entire ward. After working her regular shift at the City Hospital, Riley would work Gray Hall at night. Also working with Riley were Dr. William J. Baerg, an entomologist with the University of Arkansas, Prudence Riley, sister to Ruth and a student nurse in training at City Hospital, and volunteers from the women of Fayetteville. There were 1,002 patients with only 14 deaths.

During the Great Depression Riley lived at Fayetteville City Hospital and was on call twenty-four hours a day. Although the hospital had a capacity for sixty-seven patients in the 1940s, the daily census was greater than eighty. The basement of the nurse's home as well as hallways was utilized to place beds for the ill people.

While there is incomplete documentation of Riley's life at this time, it is possible to identify her as an energetic and unique person with the ability to improve the quality of life for other people. This was accomplished through her example as a dedicated nurse, as superintendent of nurses at Fayettevill City Hospital, as teacher and superintendent of students at Fayetteville City Hospital Training School for Nurses, as an active member of the Arkansas State Nurses Association in the formation and growth of the organization at both the local and state levels, and by serving a term as president of the Arkansas State Nurses' Association. Riley was active in nursing until she was physically unable because of diabetes. She retired from Fayetteville City Hospital in October 1959. She was elected to the Arkansas State Nurses' Association Hall of Fame in 1959, Criteria for this award included service to the organization as well as the public, and commitment to the improvement of nursing in Arkansas. Riley died in Fayetteville on December 3, 1967, after more than a half-century of service to the people of Northwest Arkansas.



THE SOCIETY LOSES A GOOD FRIEND

Colonel Jack F. Diggs who died June 17, 1986, was a true patriot with a dedicated love of his country and its history. He gave more than lip service to this dedication with a lifetime of military services, first as the son of a military officer and then as an officer himself.

Military historians and the families of Washington County men who served in combat are indebted to him for the preservation of the achievements of the Arkansas units and the men who served in them.

He was also a good friend of the historical society. His contributions included many articles in Flashback and the comprehensive history of the 142nd Field Artillery in a WCHS special bulletin.

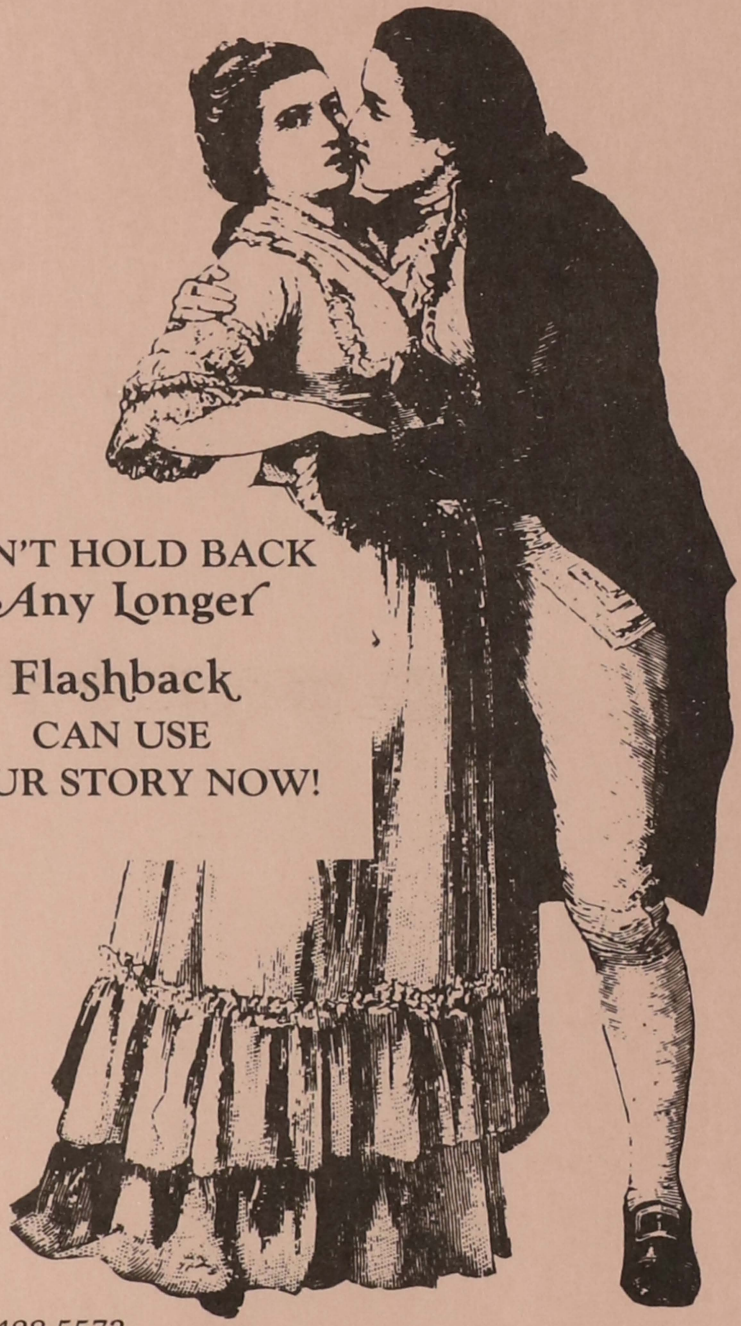
He served as chairman of the Publications Committee for many years and supervised the publication of many special bulletins, including the reprinting of Campbell's 100 Years in Fayetteville and the journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes. He also supervised the binding of the Flashback through his years of service.

Colonel Diggs financially supported the society in many ways, including being a major contributor to the saving of the Ridge House. But his contributions were also of a more personal nature including the dedication of his time and energies. One of his thoughtful and unusual contributions was the gift of a fully equipped tool box to the society, which is appreciated every time some one needs a screw driver or a hammer.

Colonel Diggs, a native of Fayetteville, was born May 23, 1922, the son of Col. John W. and Ova Washington Diggs. His mother traced her ancestry to George Washington. He served 27 years in the U.S. Army and was a 1948 graduate of the University of Arkansas.

He enlisted in the 142nd Field Artillery in 1939 and was a veteran of World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

He will be missed.



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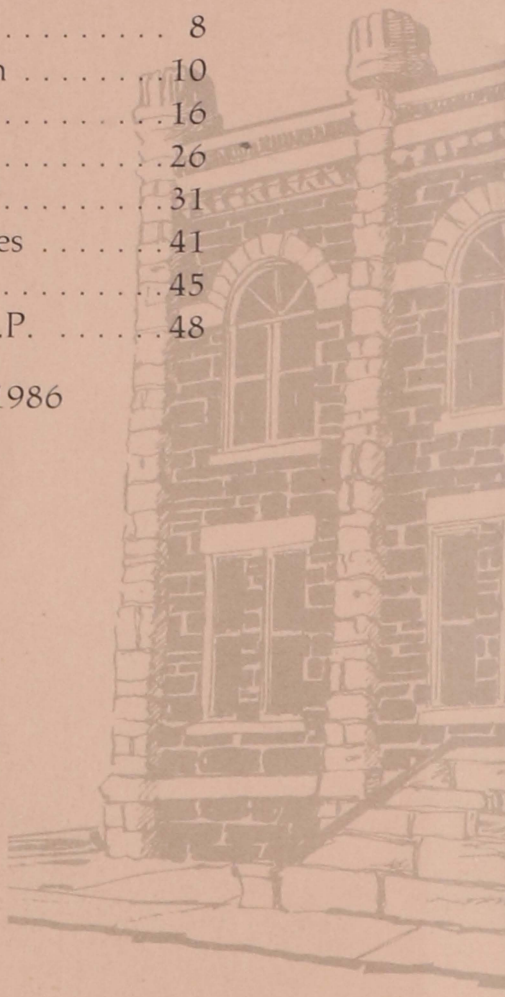
November 1986